اِنَّ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ يَهْدِيْ لِلَّتِيْ هِيَ اَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ يَعْمَلُوْنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ اَنَّ لَهُمْ اَجْرًا كَبِيْرًا

Quran English Translation and Tafseer
Sayyid Abul Ala Mawdudi

Surah 33 Al-Ahzab (The Clans)

سُوْرَةُ الْاَحْزَابِ مَدَنِيَّةٌ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

(In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate)

يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ اتَّقِ اللّٰهَ وَلَا تُطِعِ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ وَالْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ عَلِيْمًا حَكِيْمًا ۝١

(33-1) O Prophet, [1] fear Allah and do not obey the unbelievers and the hypocrites. Verily Allah is All-Knowing, Most Wise. [2]

(1) As we have mentioned in the introduction to the Surah, these verses were sent down at a time when Zaid had already divorced Zainab. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was himself feeling, and Allah had also inspired him with this, that it was the right time for striking at the root of the tradition and customs of ignorance regarding the adopted relations, and that he should take the initiative and marry the divorced wife of his adopted son (Zaid) so that the custom was completely eradicated. But the reason why he was hesitant in this regard was the fear that this would provide a strong excuse to the disbelievers and the hypocrites; who were already burning with jealousy at his successive victories, to start a propaganda campaign against him. This fear was not due to any apprehension for personal defamation, but for the reason that it would harm Islam; it would cause mistrust of Islam among the people who were inclined towards it; it would make the neutral people to join the enemy; and it would cause the weak minded people among the Muslims to be involved in doubts and suspicions. Therefore, the Prophet (peace be upon him) thought it was unwise to take a step for the eradication of a custom of ignorance, which would harm the greater interests and objectives of Islam.

(2) In the very first sentence, in the beginning of the discourse, Allah removed all the apprehensions of the Prophet (peace be upon him), as if to say: “We know better what is useful and beneficial for our religion and what is not. We know what

would be wise and what unwise in this regard. Therefore, you should not behave in a manner which would suit the disbelievers and the hypocrites, but you should behave in a manner which is according to Our Will. You should fear Us and not the disbelievers and the hypocrites."

وَّ اتَّبِعۡ مَا یُوۡحٰۤی اِلَیۡکَ مِنۡ رَّبِّکَ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰہَ کَانَ بِمَا تَعۡمَلُوۡنَ خَبِیۡرًا ۙ﴿۲﴾

(33-2) Follow that which is revealed to you from your Lord. Verily Allah is fully aware of all that you do. (3)

(3) This sentence is addressed to the Prophet (peace be upon him) as well as to the Muslims and the opponents of Islam. It means: "If the Prophet (peace be upon him) earns defamation by acting according to the command of Allah, and bears patiently the attacks of the enemy on his honor, his devoted and sincere services will not remain hidden from Allah. The state of the Muslims who remain steadfast in their loyalty to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and of those who are involved in doubts and suspicions will be known to Allah. And Allah will also not remain unaware of the attempts of the disbelievers and the hypocrites who try to defame the Prophet (peace be upon him)."

وَّ تَوَکَّلۡ عَلَی اللّٰہِ ؕ وَ کَفٰی بِاللّٰہِ وَکِیۡلًا ﴿۳﴾

(33-3) Put your trust in Allah: Allah is sufficient as Guardian. (4)

(4) The addressee of this sentence is again the Prophet (peace be upon him). He is being instructed to the effect: "Carry out the duty that is being entrusted to you with full confidence in Allah, and do not care at all even if the whole world turns hostile against you." When a man comes to know with certainty that a certain command has been given by Allah, he should have the satisfaction that his whole wellbeing and his good lies in its compliance. Then, it is not for him to see and understand its wisdom, but he should carry it out with full confidence in Allah. Allah is enough for him that the servant should entrust all his affairs to Him. He is enough for his guidance as well as help, and

He alone is also responsible that the one working under His guidance should never meet with evil consequences.

مَا جَعَلَ اللّٰهُ لِرَجُلٍ مِّنْ قَلْبَيْنِ فِيْ جَوْفِهٖ ۚ وَمَا جَعَلَ اَزْوَاجَكُمُ الّٰٓـِٔيْ تُظٰهِرُوْنَ مِنْهُنَّ اُمَّهٰتِكُمْ ۚ وَمَا جَعَلَ اَدْعِيَاۤءَكُمْ اَبْنَاۤءَكُمْ ۗ ذٰلِكُمْ قَوْلُكُمْ بِاَفْوَاهِكُمْ ۗ وَاللّٰهُ يَقُوْلُ الْحَقَّ وَهُوَ يَهْدِى السَّبِيْلَ ۝٤

(33-4) Allah has never put two hearts within one person's body; [5] nor has He made your wives, whom you compare to your mothers' backs (to divorce them), [6] your true mothers; nor has He made those whom you adopt as sons your own sons. [7] These are only words that you utter with your mouths. But Allah proclaims the Truth and directs you to the Right Path.

(5) That is, one and the same person cannot be a believer and a hypocrite, truthful and false, wicked and righteous, at one and the same time. He does not have two hearts in this chest that one should have sincerity in it and the other fearlessness of God. Therefore, a man can have only one kind of character at a time: either he will be a believer or a hypocrite, a disbeliever or a Muslim. Now if you call a believer a hypocrite, or a hypocrite a believer, it will not change the reality. The true character of the person will inevitably remain the same.

(6) Zihar is a term in Arabic. In old days when an Arab; in the heat of a domestic quarrel, would say to his wife: “Your back for me is as the back of my mother,” it was thought that the woman was no longer lawful for him because he had compared her to his mother. About this Allah says: “A woman does not become a man’s mother just because he has called her his mother or compared her to his mother. His mother is the woman who bore him. Only his calling his wife his mother cannot change the reality.” See (Surah Al- Mujadilah: Ayats 2-4).

(7) This is what is intended to be said. The two preceding sentences are meant to support and emphasize this same point.

اُ عۡ ُهِ لِاٰبَآئِم ِۡ ُوَ اَ ۡ ِقۡطُ ۡ ِعِ ۡ ِنَدَاللّٰ ِۡ فَاِنۡ لَّم ۡ تَ ۡ عۡ لَمُو ۡ اٰبَآءَهُم فَاِ ۡ خۡوَانُكُمۡ فِى الدِّ ۡ نِ ۡ وَ مَوَالِ ۡ يُكُمۡ ؕ وَ لَيۡ ۡ سَ عَلَ ۡ يۡكُمۡ جُنَاحٌ فِ ۡ مَ ۡ اَ ۡ طَاۡخۡتُمۡ بِ ۡ ٖ وَ لٰكِ ۡ ن مَّا تَعَمَّدَ ۡ تۡ قُلُ ۡ وبُكُمۡ ؕ وَ كَانَ اللّٰ ُ غَفُ ۡ وۡرًا رَّ ۡ حِيۡمًا ۡ ٥

(33-5) Call your adopted sons after their true fathers; that is more equitable in the sight of Allah. (8) But if you do not know their true fathers, then regard them as your brethren in faith and as allies. (9) You will not be taken to task for your mistaken utterances, but you will be taken to task for what you say deliberately. (10) Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Compassionate. (11)

(8) The first reform introduced in connection with the implementation of this command was that Zaid, the adopted son of the Prophet (peace be upon him), began to be called Zaid bin Harithah, after his real father, instead of Zaid bin Muhammad. Bukhari, Muslim, Tirmidhi and Nasai have related this tradition from Abdullah bin Umar that in the beginning the people called him Zaid bin Muhammad. After the revelation of this verse they began calling him Zaid bin Harithah. Moreover, after this revelation it was forbidden that a person should assign his parentage to any other man than his own real father. Bukhari, Muslim and Abu Daud have related on the authority of Saad bin Abi Waqqas that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “Paradise is forbidden for the one who called himself son of another person than his own father.” Other traditions bearing on the subject have been related in Ahadith, which have regarded this as a heinous sin.

(9) That is, even in such a case it will not be right to ascribe the parentage of a person to someone else.

(10) It means: there is no harm if a person is called a son out of love. Likewise, there is no sin if someone calls another one a mother, or a daughter, or sister or brother, etc. out of affection and regard, but if such a thing is said with the intention that the one being called so will be accorded the same status and position and rights and privileges as actually belong to these relations, it would certainly be objectionable and one will be held answerable for it.”

(11) That is, Allah has forgiven the errors already committed in this regard; no one will be called to account for them. Another meaning is: Allah does not call a people to account for actions done unintentionally. He will not punish a person for doing something which he did not do intentionally, although apparently it resembled a forbidden act.

اَلنَّبِیُّ اَولٰی بِا ۡ ؤُمِنِیۡ نَ مِ ۡ ن اَنۡفُسِہِم وَ اَزۡوَاجُہٗۤ اُمَّہٰتُہُم ؕ وَ اُولُوا الۡاَ رۡحَامِ بَعۡضُہُم اَوۡلٰی بِبَعۡضٍ فِیۡ کِتٰبِ اللّٰہِ مِنَ ا ۡ ؤُمِنِیۡ نَ وَ الۡمُ ۡ ہٰجِرِیۡ نَ اِلَّاۤ اَنۡ تَفۡ عَلُوۡۤا اِلٰۤی اَوۡ لِیٰٓئِکُمۡ مَّعۡ رُوۡفًا ؕ کَانَ ذٰلِکَ فِی ا لۡکِتٰبِ مَسۡطُوۡرًا ۶

(33-6) Surely the Prophet has a greater claim over the believers than they have over each other, (12) and his wives are their mothers. (13) According to the Book of Allah, blood relatives have greater claim over each other than the rest of the believers and the Emigrants (in the cause of Allah), except that you may do some good to your allies (if you so wish). (14) This is inscribed in the Book of Allah.

(12) That is, the relationship of the Prophet (peace be upon him) with the Muslims and of the Muslims with the Prophet (peace be upon him) is of a superior nature, over and above all human relationships. No other relationship is in any way comparable with the relationship that exists between the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the believers. The Prophet (peace be upon him) is more compassionate and affectionate and a greater well-wisher of the Muslims than their own parents, even their own selves. Their parents and their wives and children can harm them, can treat them in a selfish manner and mislead them, can make them commit errors and mistakes, can push them into Hell, but the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) case is different: he will do for them only that which results in and leads to their eternal well-being and enduring happiness. They can commit follies resulting in their own ruin and disaster, but the Prophet (peace be upon him) will wish for them only that which is beneficial and useful for them. And when it is so, the Prophet (peace be upon him) also has a right on the Muslims that they should regard him dearer

than their own parents, their own children, even their own selves. They should love him more than anything and anybody else in the world; should prefer his judgment and opinion to their own and should submit to every command that he gives.

The same thing has been said by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in a Hadith, which Bukhari and Muslim and others have related with a little difference in wording: “No one of you can be a believer until I become dearer to him than his own father and his own children and all mankind.”

(13) On the basis of the special relationship mentioned above, another characteristic of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is that his wives are forbidden to the Muslims just like their own real mothers although their adopted mothers are in no sense their real mothers. This thing is peculiar only to the person of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and of no other man in the world.

In this connection, one should also know that the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him) are mothers of the believers only in the sense that the Muslims are under obligation to have reverence and respect for them, and no Muslim could marry them. As for other matters they are not like the mothers. For example, apart from their real relatives, all other Muslims were non-mahram for them from whom they had to observe hijab; their daughters were not like real sisters for the Muslims, so that no Muslim could marry them; their brothers and sisters were not like the maternal uncles and aunts for the Muslims; they could not be inherited by a Muslim, unless a close relative, as a mother is inherited by her son.

Another noteworthy point in this connection is that according to the Quran, this status accrues to all the wives (may Allah be pleased with them all) of the Prophet (peace be upon him), among whom Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) is also included. But, when a section (of the Muslims) made Ali and Fatimah and their children (may Allah be pleased with them all) the center of their faith and made the whole system of religion revolve around them, and made Aishah (may Allah be pleased

with her), along with many other companions, the target of curse and abuse, this verse became a hindrance for them, for according to it every person who claims to be a believer has to acknowledge her as his mother. Consequently, to overcome this difficulty a strange claim was made to the effect: The Prophet (peace be upon him) had given Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) the authority that after his death he could allow any of his wives he liked to retain her position of the wife and divorce any other on his behalf. Abu Mansur Ahmad bin Abu Talib Tabrasi has written this in Kitab al-Ihtijaj and Suleman bin Abdullah al-Bahrani has related that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to Ali (may Allah be pleased with him) "O Abul Hasan: this honor will last till the time that we remain steadfast on obedience to Allah. Therefore, you may divorce any of my wives, who after me disobeys Allah by revolting against you, and deprive her of the honor that belongs to the mothers of the faithful."

This is a false-tradition even according to the principles of reporting Hadith. But if one studies (Ayats 28-29 and 51-52 of this very Surah Al-Ahzab), one finds that this tradition goes against the Quran as well. For after the revelation of the "verse of the option" (Ayat 29), the Prophet's (peace be upon him) right of divorce against those of his wives who chose to remain with him through every difficulty had been curtailed. For further explanation, see(E.Ns 42 and 93)below.

Moreover, if an unbiased person only uses his common sense and considers this tradition carefully, he will find that it is utterly absurd and highly derogatory in respect to the Prophet (peace be upon him). The rank and position of the Messenger of Allah is very high and exalted. It cannot even be expected of an ordinary man that he would think of divorcing his wife after his death, and on leaving the world, would authorize his son-in-law to divorce her on his behalf if there arose a dispute between him and her in the future. This shows what regard these sectarians have for the honor and reverence of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and even for the divine law.

(14) The verse means this: “As for the Prophet (peace be upon him) the nature of the Muslims’ relationship with him is unique. But as far as the common Muslims are concerned, their mutual relationship will be based on the principle that the rights of the relatives on one another are given priority over the rights of others. No charity is right if a person overlooks the needs and requirements of his own parents and children and brothers and sisters, and gives away charities to others. The Zakat money also will be used first of all to help one’s own poor relatives and then the other needy people. The inheritance will necessarily be divided among those who are nearest in relation to the deceased. As for others, the dying person may give them a part of his wealth as a gift or by trust and will. But in no case is he allowed to deprive his rightful heirs and give away everything to others. After this divine command the system of “Brotherhood” that had been established between the Muhajirin and the Ansar after the Hijrah also became abolished, for according to it the Muhajirin and the Ansar became heirs to one another only on the basis of their relationship of being the brethren in faith. Allah enjoined the law that inheritance will be divided only on the basis of blood relationship; however, a person could help his brother-in-faith by making him a gift or through a will if he so liked.

وَ اِذۡ اَخَذۡنَا مِنَ النَّبِیّٖنَ مِیۡثَاقَہُمۡ وَ مِنۡکَ وَ مِنۡ نُّوۡحٍ وَّ اِبۡرٰہِیۡمَ وَ مُوۡسٰی وَ عِیۡسَی ابۡنِ مَرۡیَمَ ۪ وَ اَخَذۡنَا مِنۡہُمۡ مِّیۡثَاقًا غَلِیۡظًا ۙ﴿۷﴾

(33-7) And call to mind, (O Prophet), when We took the covenant from all Prophets; and also from you and Noah and Abraham, Moses, and Jesus the son of Mary. We took from them a solemn covenant (15)

(15) Allah in this verse has reminded the Prophet (peace be upon him) that, like all other Prophets, He has taken from him to a solemn covenant which he should abide by strictly. A study of the preceding verse shows that the covenant implies: “The Prophet will first himself obey and follow every command received from Allah, and then make others also to obey and follow it: he will convey Allah's commands intact to others and will show no laxity

in the struggle to enforce them practically.” This covenant has been mentioned at several other places in the Quran, e.g.

(1) He has appointed for you the same way of life which he appointed for Noah and which (O Muhammad) We have now revealed to you, and which We had already enjoined on Abraham and Moses and Jesus (peace be upon them), stressing : Establish this Way and be not divided in it. (Surah Ash-Shura: Ayat 13).

(2) And remember that Allah had made the covenant with the people who had been given the scripture, and enjoined: You shall spread the teachings of the Book among the people and shall not conceal them.” (Surah Ale-Imran: Ayat 187).

(3) Remember that We made a solemn covenant with the children of Israel to the effect: Worship (and submit to) none save Allah. (Surah Al-Baqarah: Ayat 83).

(4) Has not the covenant of the Book been taken from them: Hold fast the Book that We have given to you, and keep in mind what it contains: it is expected that you will refrain from wrong ways. (Surah Al-Araf: Ayats 169- 171).

(5) Keep in mind the blessing Allah has bestowed on you and do not forget the solemn covenant which He made with you, when you said, We have heard and submitted.” (Surah A1-Maidah: Ayat 7)

The reason why Allah is reminding of this covenant in this context is that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was feeling hesitant to break the custom of ignorance in respect of the adopted relations due to the apprehension that the enemies of Islam would put him to a disadvantage. He was feeling shy time and again at the thought: The question is of marrying a woman. I may take this initiative with the purest intention only for the sake of a social reform, but the enemies will certainly say that I have done so for the purpose of satisfying my desires, and I am in fact trying to deceive others under the guise of a reformer. That is why Allah assures him, saying: “You arc a Prophet appointed by

Us. Like all other Prophets, you are also bound in the covenant that you will carry out whatever command We give and instruct others to follow it. Therefore, you should not bother at all about taunts and derision by others, do not be afraid and feel shy of others, and carry out without hesitation the service that We want to take from you."

A section of the people think that this covenant is the covenant that was taken from all the Prophets and their communities, who came before the Prophet (peace be upon him), to the effect that they would believe in the Prophet who came afterwards and cooperate with him. On the basis of this interpretation they claim that the door to Prophethood is still open after the Prophet (peace be upon him). And this covenant has also been taken from the Prophet (peace be upon him), that his followers will believe in the prophet who will come after him. But the context in which the verse occurs is explicit that this interpretation is absolutely wrong, There is no occasion whatever in the context to indicate that other prophets will also come after the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his followers should believe in them. If the verse is read in this sense, it becomes irrelevant and incoherent. Moreover, there is no indication in the words of the verse to show which covenant is implied here. Therefore, to find out the nature of the covenant, we shall have to turn to other verses of the Quran in which mention has been made of the covenants taken from the Prophets. Now, if only one sort of the covenants had been mentioned in the entire Quran, i.e., the covenant that the people shall believe in the prophets coming afterwards, it would be correct to think that here also the covenant implied the same covenant. But anyone who has studied the Quran with an open mind knows that it has mentioned many covenants, which were taken from the Prophets and their followers. Therefore, only that covenant from among the different covenant would be implied here, which fitted in with the context here, and not the one which was altogether irrelevant. Such wrong interpretations reveal the mentality of the people who wish to draw no guidance from the Quran but want to reinterpret it instead.

لِّيَسْـَٔلَ الصّٰدِقِيْنَ عَنْ صِدْقِهِمْ ۚ وَاَعَدَّ لِلْكٰفِرِيْنَ عَذَابًا اَلِيْمًا ۝٨

(33-8) so that (their Lord) may question the truthful about their truthfulness. (16) As for the unbelievers, He has kept a painful chastisement in store for them. (17)

(16) That is, Allah has not just taken the covenant but will also question as to how far it has been kept. Then only those who will have kept Allah's covenant faithfully, will be declared to be the truthful.

(17) To understand the theme of (Ayats 1-8) fully, these should be read together with (Ayats 36-41 of this Surah).

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَةَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ اِذْ جَآءَتْكُمْ جُنُوْدٌ فَاَرْسَلْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ رِيْحًا وَّجُنُوْدًا لَّمْ تَرَوْهَا ۭ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ بَصِيْرًا ۝٩

(33-9) Believers, (18) call to mind Allah's favor to you when enemy hosts invaded you. Then We sent against them a wind and hosts that you did not see although (19) Allah was observing all that you were then doing.

(18) In (Ayats 9-27), an appraisal has been made of the battle of the Trench and the raid against the Bani Quraizah. These were revealed at the end of the raid. One should keep the details of these events in view as given in the introduction above.

(19) The windstorm did not lash the enemy forces immediately on their arrival but it occurred while the siege of Al-Madinah had lasted about a month. “Armies whom you did not see” implies the hidden powers which operate in the affairs of men under Allah’s command and of which men are totally unaware. Man regards the occurrence of events and incidents as resulting from apparent causes and does not take into account the hidden forces at work, whereas in most cases these very hidden forces play the decisive role. As these forces function under the command of Allah’s angels, the “armies” may imply the angels as well though there is no indication here of sending the armies of the angels.

إِذْ جَآءُوْكُمْ مِّنْ فَوْقِكُمْ وَمِنْ اَسْفَلَ مِنْكُمْ وَاِذْ زَاغَتِ الْاَبْصَارُ وَبَلَغَتِ الْقُلُوْبُ الْحَنَاجِرَ وَتَظُنُّوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ الظُّنُوْنَا ﴿١٠﴾

(33-10) When they came upon you from above you and from below you, (20) when your eyes were stupefied with horror and your hearts leapt to your throats, and you began to entertain diverse thoughts about Allah.

(20) It may mean: The enemies came upon you from every side, and also that those coming from Najd and Khaiber came from above and those coming from Makkah from below you."

هُنَالِكَ ابْتُلِيَ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ وَزُلْزِلُوْا زِلْزَالًا شَدِيْدًا ﴿١١﴾

(33-11) The believers were then put to a severe test and were most violently convulsed. (21)

(21) "The believers": All those who accepted the Prophet (peace be upon him) as Allah's Messenger and became included among his followers, which comprised both the true believers and the hypocrites. In this paragraph Allah has made mention of the Muslim community as a whole. In the following three paragraphs the attitude of the hypocrites has been commented upon, and the next two deal with the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the true believers.

وَاِذْ يَقُوْلُ الْمُنٰفِقُوْنَ وَالَّذِيْنَ فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ مَّا وَعَدَنَا اللّٰهُ وَرَسُوْلُهٗٓ اِلَّا غُرُوْرًا ﴿١٢﴾

(33-12) And call to mind when the hypocrites and all those with diseased hearts said: "All that Allah and His Messenger had promised us (22) was nothing but deceit."

(22) That is, "Promises to the effect that the believers will get Allah's support and succor and will be helped to attain victory in the end."

وَاِذْ قَالَتْ طَّآئِفَةٌ مِّنْهُمْ يٰٓاَهْلَ يَثْرِبَ لَا مُقَامَ لَكُمْ فَارْجِعُوْا وَيَسْتَاْذِنُ فَرِيْقٌ مِّنْهُمُ النَّبِيَّ يَقُوْلُوْنَ اِنَّ بُيُوْتَنَا عَوْرَةٌ وَمَا هِيَ بِعَوْرَةٍ اِنْ يُّرِيْدُوْنَ اِلَّا فِرَارًا ﴿١٣﴾

(33-13) And when a section of them said: “(O people of Yathrib), now there is no place for you to stay, so turn back.” [23] (And call to mind) when a section of them was seeking permission from the Prophet to leave, saying: “Our houses are exposed (to attack),” [24] although they were not exposed (to attack); [25] they only wished to flee (from the battle-front).

(23) This sentence has two meanings: The apparent meaning is that there is no chance for them to stay at the Trench against the polytheists; therefore, they should return to the city. And the hidden meaning is that there is no chance for them to remain in Islam; therefore, they should return to their ancestral religion, so that they might escape the danger in which they had involved themselves by earning the hostility of the whole of Arabia. The hypocrites uttered such mischievous things so that they could make the one who would listen to them understand the intended hidden meaning, but in case someone took exception to their words, they could say they had been misunderstood.

(24) That is, when the Bani Quraizah also joined the invaders, the hypocrites had a good excuse for defection and they started asking the Prophet (peace be upon him) for leave to go and protect their houses and families, which, they said, had been endangered, whereas at that time the Prophet (peace be upon him) was responsible for the defense and protection of all the people of Al-Madinah. After the treachery of the Quraizah it was for the Prophet (peace be upon him) to devise plans for the protection of the city and its people and not of the soldiers of the army individually.

(25) That is, the Prophet (peace be upon him) had already made arrangements for protection against the danger, which were a part of the collective scheme of defense being implemented by him as commander of the Islamic forces. Therefore, there was no immediate danger in the face of which these people could justifiably make such an excuse.

وَلَوۡ دُخِلَتۡ عَلَيۡهِم مِّنۡ أَقۡطَارِهَا ثُمَّ سُئِلُوا ٱلۡفِتۡنَةَ لَأٰتَوۡهَا وَمَا تَلَبَّثُواْ بِهَآ إِلَّا يَسِيرٗا ١٤

(33-14) If the enemy were to enter the town from various directions, and they were summoned to act treacherously, (26) they would have succumbed to it and would have shown little reluctance in doing so.

(26) "Exhorted to treachery": Urged by the disbelievers to join them to vanquish the Muslims after entering the city as conquerors.

وَ لَقَدۡ كَانُوۡا عَاهَدُوا اللّٰهَ مِنۡ قَبۡلُ لَا يُوَلُّوۡنَ الۡاَدۡبَارَ ؕ وَ كَانَ عَهۡدُ اللّٰهِ مَسۡـُٔوۡلًا ﴿۱۵﴾

(33-15) They had earlier covenanted with Allah that they would not turn their backs in flight. And a covenant made with Allah must needs be answered for. (27)

(27) That is, they had felt regret at the weakness they had shown on the occasion of the battle of Uhud and pledged to Allah that they would compensate for their error in any trial that they would confront in the future. But Allah cannot be deceived by empty words. He puts to one or the other test everyone who makes a pledge with Him so that his sincerity of intention or otherwise is found out. Therefore, just after two years of the battle of Uhud, He made them confront an even more serious danger and discovered how far they were sincere in their pledge.

قُلۡ لَّنۡ يَّنۡفَعَكُمُ الۡفِرَارُ اِنۡ فَرَرۡتُمۡ مِّنَ الۡمَوۡتِ اَوِ الۡقَتۡلِ وَ اِذًا لَّا تُمَتَّعُوۡنَ اِلَّا قَلِيۡلًا ﴿۱۶﴾

(33-16) (O Prophet), tell them: "If you run away from death or slaying, this flight will not avail you. You will have little time after that to enjoy (28) (the pleasures of life)."

(28) That is, this flight of yours will not add anything to your life. In no case will you live forever and gain the whole wealth of the world. Hardly a few years will you live after your flight and enjoy life only as long as it is destined for you.

قُلۡ مَنۡ ذَا الَّذِیۡ یَعۡصِمُکُمۡ مِّنَ اللّٰہِ اِنۡ اَرَادَ بِکُمۡ سُوۡٓءًا اَوۡ اَرَادَ بِکُمۡ رَحۡمَۃً ؕ وَ لَا یَجِدُوۡنَ لَہُمۡ مِّنۡ دُوۡنِ اللّٰہِ وَلِیًّا وَّ لَا نَصِیۡرًا ﴿۱۷﴾

(33-17) Say (to them): “Who can protect you from Allah if He desires an evil for you? And who can prevent Him if He desires to show mercy to you?” They shall find none other than Allah to be their protector or helper.

قَدۡ یَعۡلَمُ اللّٰہُ الۡمُعَوِّقِیۡنَ مِنۡکُمۡ وَ الۡقَآئِلِیۡنَ لِاِخۡوَانِہِمۡ ہَلُمَّ اِلَیۡنَا ۚ وَ لَا یَاۡتُوۡنَ الۡبَاۡسَ اِلَّا قَلِیۡلًا ﴿۱۸﴾

(33-18) Allah knows well those of you who create obstructions (in war efforts) and say to their brethren: “Come and join us.” [29] They hardly take any part in battle.

(29) That is, abandon this Prophet (peace be upon him) and do not become involved in dangers and afflictions only for the sake of the faith and truth. Live a life of ease and comfort as we do.

اَشِحَّۃً عَلَیۡکُمۡ ۚ فَاِذَا جَآءَ الۡخَوۡفُ رَاَیۡتَہُمۡ یَنۡظُرُوۡنَ اِلَیۡکَ تَدُوۡرُ اَعۡیُنُہُمۡ کَالَّذِیۡ یُغۡشٰی عَلَیۡہِ مِنَ الۡمَوۡتِ ۚ فَاِذَا ذَہَبَ الۡخَوۡفُ سَلَقُوۡکُمۡ بِاَلۡسِنَۃٍ حِدَادٍ اَشِحَّۃً عَلَی الۡخَیۡرِ ؕ اُولٰٓئِکَ لَمۡ یُؤۡمِنُوۡا فَاَحۡبَطَ اللّٰہُ اَعۡمَالَہُمۡ ؕ وَ کَانَ ذٰلِکَ عَلَی اللّٰہِ یَسِیۡرًا ﴿۱۹﴾

(33-19) They are utterly niggardly [30] (in coming to your aid). Whenever there is danger, you will see them looking at you, their eyes rolling as though they were on the verge of fainting at the approach of death. But when the danger passes away, their greed for wealth prompts them to greet you with their sharp, scissor-like tongues. [31] These are the ones who never truly believed, and so Allah has caused their deeds to be reduced to naught. [32] That is easy enough for Allah. [33]

(30) “Being miserly”: Those who are not at all willing to spend their energies, their time, their wealth, etc. in any way in which the true believers are spending whatever they have. Not to speak of exerting themselves and braving the dangers, they do not want to cooperate with the believers in anything with an open heart.

(31) Lexically, this verse has two meanings:

(1) When you return victorious from a war, they receive you warmly, and try to impress you with a sweet tongue that they too are sincere believers and they too have made their contribution to promote the cause of Islam, and therefore, they deserve a share from the booty.

(2) If victory is attained, these people show great powers of the tongue at the time of the division of the spoils and make great demands for their shares, recounting their services for the cause of Islam.

(32) That is, Allah will make null and void all the prayers that they offered, all the fasts that they observed, the zakat that they paid, and other good works that they did after embracing Islam, and will give them no reward for these. For Allah does not judge actions and deeds according to their external form but on the basis of the faith and sincerity underlying them. When the actions are altogether devoid of this quality, there will be mere show and, therefore, meaningless. Here, one thing is especially noteworthy. A clear verdict has been given about the people who professed to believe in Allah and His Messenger, offered the Prayers, observed the fast, gave the Zakat and cooperated with the Muslims in other good works, to the effect that they did not believe at all. This verdict has been given because when they were put to the test during the conflict between Islam and un-Islam, they showed double standard, preferred selfish interests above the interests of the faith, and shirked offering their selves and their wealth and their energies for the protection of Islam. This shows that the real criterion of the judgment are not the apparent deeds but the loyalties of man. If a person is not loyal to God and His way, his profession of the faith and his worship and other good deeds are worthless.

(33) That is, as their deeds and actions do not carry any value, Allah renders them fruitless without the slightest hesitation; and as they do not have any power to resist. Allah has no difficulty in destroying their deeds altogether.

يَحۡسَبُوۡنَ الۡاَحۡزَابَ لَمۡ يَذۡهَبُوۡا ۚ وَاِنۡ يَّاۡتِ الۡاَحۡزَابُ يَوَدُّوۡا لَوۡ اَنَّهُمۡ بَادُوۡنَ فِى الۡاَعۡرَابِ يَسۡـَٔلُوۡنَ عَنۡ اَنۡۢبَآئِكُمۡ ؕ وَلَوۡ كَانُوۡا فِيۡكُمۡ مَّا قٰتَلُوۡۤا اِلَّا قَلِيۡلًا ۞ ٢٠

(33-20) They think that the invading confederates have not yet gone. But if the confederates were to mount another assault, they would wish to be in the desert among the Bedouins and keep themselves informed about you from there. But even if they remained in your midst, hardly would they fight.

لَقَدۡ كَانَ لَكُمۡ فِىۡ رَسُوۡلِ اللّٰهِ اُسۡوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَنۡ كَانَ يَرۡجُوا اللّٰهَ وَالۡيَوۡمَ الۡاٰخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللّٰهَ كَثِيۡرًا ؕ ٢١

(33-21) Surely there was a good example for you in the Messenger of Allah, (34) for all those who look forward to Allah and the Last Day and remember Allah much. (35)

(34) In view of the context in which this verse occurs, the object of presenting the Prophet's (peace be upon him) conduct and way of life as a model was to teach a lesson to the people, who had been motivated by considerations of selfish interests and personal safety on the occasion of the battle of the Trench. They are being addressed, as if to say: "You claimed to be the believers and Muslims and followers of the Messenger (peace be upon him). You should have seen how the Messenger (peace be upon him), whose followers you claimed to be, conducted himself on the occasion. If the leader of a group is himself a seeker of personal security, is lazy and indolent, gives preference to personal interests to everything else, and is ever ready to flee danger, it would be reasonable to expect manifestation of such weakness from his followers. But here the case was different. The Prophet (peace be upon him) endured along with others every toil and labor that he asked others to endure, and endured more than others; there was no trouble which others might have experienced and he himself did. not. He was among those who dug the trench, and endured hunger and other afflictions just as the common Muslims did. He did not leave the battlefront even for a moment during the siege nor retreated an inch. After the betrayal of the Bani Quraizah his own family had also been

exposed to danger even as the families of the other Muslims were. He did not make any special arrangement for his own and his family's protection, which did not exist for others. He was always in the forefront to offer maximum sacrifices for the great objectives for which he was constantly asking others to make sacrifices. Therefore, whoever made a claim of being his follower should have followed the practical example set by the leader.

This is the meaning of the verse in the context here. But its words are general and there is no reason why it should be confined to these meanings only. Allah does not say that only in this respect His Messenger's (peace be upon him) life is a model for the Muslims to follow, but has regarded it as a model absolutely. Therefore, the verse demands that the Muslims should take the Prophet's (peace be upon him) life as a model for themselves in every affair of life and should mold their character and personality according to it.

(35) That is, the Prophet's (peace be upon him) life is no model for the person who is forgetful of God, but it certainly is a model for him who remembers Allah much and consistently and not only occasionally just by chance. Likewise, this life is no model for him who has no hope from Allah and does not expect resurrection to take place, but it is most surely a model for the person who is hopeful of Allah's grace and His favors, and who is also mindful that the Day of Judgment will come when his well-being will wholly depend on how closely his conduct resembled the conduct and character of the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah in this world.

وَ لَمَّا رَاَ الۡمُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ الۡاَحۡزَابَ ۙ قَالُوۡا هٰذَا مَا وَعَدَنَا اللّٰهُ وَ رَسُوۡلُهٗ وَ صَدَقَ اللّٰهُ وَ رَسُوۡلُهٗ ۫ وَ مَا زَادَهُمۡ اِلَّاۤ اِيۡمَانًا وَّ تَسۡلِيۡمًا ؕ ۲۲

(33-22) As for the true believers, (36) when they saw the invading confederates, they cried out: "This is what Allah and His Messenger had promised us, and what Allah and His Messenger said was absolutely true." (37) This only increased their faith and submission. (38)

(36) After drawing attention to the model of the Prophet (peace be upon him), Allah now presents the model of his companions so that the character of the false claimants to faith and of the sincere followers of the Messenger (peace be upon him) is clearly contrasted.

Although both were alike apparently in the affirmation of the faith, both were counted as Muslims, and both attended at the Prayers, they were separated from each other as soon as the time of the trial approached, and it became clear who were loyal to Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) and who were Muslims only in name.

(37) Here, one should keep (Verse 12) in view. There it was said that when the hypocrites and the people with diseased hearts found themselves surrounded by a huge force of ten to twelve thousand men from the front and by the Bani Quraizah from behind, they openly started saying: “The promises that Allah and His Messenger had made with us were nothing but a delusion. We were promised that if we believed in Allah’s religion, His succor would be at our back and we would rule Arabia and the world outside and all the wealth of Caesar and Chosroes will be ours, but here we are that the whole of Arabia is bent upon exterminating us, and there is no sign yet of the armies of the angels in sight, who would save us and protect us against this grave calamity.” Now they are being told: “One meaning of the promise of Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) was that which was understood by these false claimants to faith. The other meaning is that which is understood by the sincere and true Muslims. When they saw the storms of danger gathering, they too remembered the promises of Allah, but these promises did not mean that as soon as they affirmed the faith they would overwhelm and subdue the whole world without the slightest effort, and the angels would come to perform their coronation, but the promises actually meant that they would have to pass through severe trials, endure extreme hardships and afflictions, offer supreme sacrifices; then only will Allah bless them with His grace and they will be granted successes of the world and the Hereafter, which Allah has promised to His believing servants.

"Do you think that you will enter Paradise without undergoing such trials as were experienced by the believers before you? They met with adversity and afflictions and were so shaken by trials that the Prophet of the time and his followers cried out: When will Allah's help come?" "Yes, Allah's help is near." (Surah Al-Baqarah: Ayat 214).

"Do the people think that they will be left alone after they have once said, We have believed, and they will not be tested? The fact is that We have put to the test all those who have gone before them. Surely, Allah has to see who are the truthful and who the liars." (Surah Al-Ankabut: Ayats 2-3).

(38) That is, "On seeing the hard times of affliction approaching, they did not waver in their faith but were strengthened in it all the more, and instead of giving up Allah's obedience, they became ready to resign and surrender to Him whatever they had with complete conviction and satisfaction of the heart."

Here, one should fully understand that faith and resignation is indeed a quality of the self which is put to trial and test at every command and demand of the faith. At every step in life man comes across situations where the faith either enjoins something or forbids something, or requires one to make sacrifices of life and wealth and time and desires of the self. At every such occasion the faith and conviction of the person who deviates from obedience will suffer decline and the faith and conviction of him who submits to the command and demand will be strengthened and enhanced. Although in the beginning a man becomes a believer and Muslim only by embracing the fundamental creed (Kalimah) of Islam, yet his state of faith does not remain static but is open to both deterioration and development. Decline in sincerity and the spirit of obedience causes it to deteriorate; so much so that constant retrogression may cause the person to reach the last limits of the faith where the slightest move backward may turn him from a believer to a hypocrite. Contrary to this, the more sincere a person is, the more

perfect his obedience and the greater his devotion and dedication to the cause of the true faith, the stronger and more sound will he grow in faith and may even attain the supreme rank of the truthful. But this increase and decrease in the faith has only the moral significance which can be judged and reckoned by none but Allah. As for the man, faith is simply the act of affirmation by which a Muslim enters Islam and is regarded as a Muslim as long as he remains steadfast to it. In this regard, we cannot say that so and so is half a Muslim, or one third a Muslim, and another one a double Muslim or a triple Muslim. Likewise, in legal rights the Muslims are equal and alike. It cannot be that one is regarded a greater believer and given more rights and another one a lesser believer and given less rights. In these aspects there can be no question of the increase and decrease in the faith, and in fact, in this very sense has Imam Abu Hanifah said: “faith in Islam neither increases nor decreases.”

مِنَ الۡمُؤۡمِنِيۡنَ رِجَالٌ صَدَقُوۡا مَا عَاهَدُوا اللّٰهَ عَلَيۡهِ ۚ فَمِنۡهُمۡ مَّنۡ قَضٰى نَحۡبَهٗ وَ مِنۡهُمۡ مَّنۡ يَّنۡتَظِرُ ۫ وَ مَا بَدَّلُوۡا تَبۡدِيۡلًا ۖ﴿۲۳﴾

(33-23) Among the believers there are those who have remained true to the covenant they made with Allah. Among those some of them have fulfilled their vow and others await the appointed time. (39) They have not changed in the least.

(39) That is, “Someone has already offered his life in the way of Allah, and someone is awaiting the time when he will offer it for the sake of his faith.”

لِّيَجۡزِىَ اللّٰهُ الصّٰدِقِيۡنَ بِصِدۡقِهِمۡ وَ يُعَذِّبَ الۡمُنٰفِقِيۡنَ اِنۡ شَآءَ اَوۡ يَتُوۡبَ عَلَيۡهِمۡ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ غَفُوۡرًا رَّحِيۡمًا ﴿۲۴﴾

(33-24) (All this is) in order that Allah may reward the truthful for their truthfulness, and either punish the hypocrites or, if He so wills, accept their repentance. Verily Allah is Most Pardoning, Most Compassionate.

وَ رَدَّ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيۡنَ كَفَرُوۡا بِغَيۡظِهِمۡ لَمۡ يَنَالُوۡا خَيۡرًا ؕ وَ كَفَى اللّٰهُ الۡمُؤۡمِنِيۡنَ الۡقِتَالَ ؕ وَ كَانَ اللّٰهُ قَوِيًّا عَزِيۡزًا ﴿۲۵﴾

(33-25) Allah sent back the unbelievers empty-handed, their hearts seething with rage. Allah sufficed the believers in their fight. Allah is Most Powerful, Most Mighty.

وَ اَنۡزَلَ الَّذِيۡنَ ظَاهَرُوۡهُمۡ مِّنۡ اَهۡلِ الۡكِتٰبِ مِنۡ صَيَاصِيۡهِمۡ وَ قَذَفَ فِىۡ قُلُوۡبِهِمُ الرُّعۡبَ فَرِيۡقًا تَقۡتُلُوۡنَ وَ تَاۡسِرُوۡنَ فَرِيۡقًا ﴿۲۶﴾

(33-26) Allah brought down from their fortresses those People of the Book who had supported the invading confederates (40) and cast such terror into their hearts that some of them you kill and some of them you take captive.

(40) That is, Jews of the Bani Quraizah.

وَ اَوۡرَثَكُمۡ اَرۡضَهُمۡ وَ دِيَارَهُمۡ وَ اَمۡوَالَهُمۡ وَ اَرۡضًا لَّمۡ تَطَـئُوۡهَا ؕ وَ كَانَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَىۡءٍ قَدِيۡرًا ﴿۲۷﴾

(33-27) Allah made you inherit their land, their dwellings, and their goods, and a piece of land on which you had not yet trodden. Verily Allah has power over all things.

يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّبِىُّ قُلۡ لِّاَزۡوَاجِكَ اِنۡ كُنۡتُنَّ تُرِدۡنَ الۡحَيٰوةَ الدُّنۡيَا وَ زِيۡنَتَهَا فَتَعَالَيۡنَ اُمَتِّعۡكُنَّ وَ اُسَرِّحۡكُنَّ سَرَاحًا جَمِيۡلًا ﴿۲۸﴾

(33-28) O Prophet, (41) tell your wives: “If you seek the world and its embellishments, then come and I will make some provision for you and release you in an honorable way.

(41) The verses from here to 35 were revealed in the period contiguous to the battle of the Trench and the raid on Bani Quraizah, whose background we have touched upon in the Introduction to this Surah. According to a tradition related in Muslim on the authority of Jabir bin Abdullah, “One day when Abu Bakr and Umar (may Allah be pleased with them) visited the Prophet (peace be upon him), they saw that his wives were sitting around him and he was quiet. Addressing Umar, he said: They are sitting around me as you see: they are asking for money for household expenditure.” At this both the companions rebuked

their daughters and said, “Why do you embarrass the Prophet (peace be upon him) and demand from him that which he does not have.” This event shows how economically hard pressed the Prophet (peace be upon him) was at that time, and how distressed and embarrassed he was feeling at his wives’ demand for domestic expenditure during the period when a bitter conflict was going on between Islam and paganism.

وَاِنۡ كُنۡتُنَّ تُرِدۡنَ اللّٰهَ وَ رَسُوۡلَهٗ وَ الدَّارَ الۡاٰخِرَةَ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ اَعَدَّ لِلۡمُحۡسِنٰتِ مِنۡكُنَّ اَجۡرًا عَظِيۡمًا ﴿۲۹﴾

(33-29) But if you seek Allah and His Messenger and the Abode of the Hereafter, then surely Allah has prepared a great reward for those of you who do good.” (42)

(42) At the time when this verse was revealed, the Prophct (peace be with him) had four wives with him: Saudah, Aishah, Hafsah and Umm Salamah. He had not yet married Zainab. (may Allah be pleased with them all). (Ibn Arabia Ahkam ai-Quran. Egyptian Edition, 1958, vol. III, pp. 512-13). When this verse was revealed, he first spoke to Aishah, and said: “I ask you a thing; do not be hasty in answering; consult your parents, then decide.” Then he told her of Allah’s command and recited this verse. She replied: “Should I consult my parents about this?” I seek Allah and His Messenger and the Hereafter. After this he went to each of his wives and asked the same thing and each one gave the same reply as had been given by Aishah. (Musnad Ahmad, Muslim, Nasai).

This is termed takhyir, i.e. to give the wife the option to decide for herself whether she would stay in wedlock or would separate from the husband. This was obligatory for the Prophet (peace be with him) because he had been commanded by Allah to offer such an option to his wives. If a lady from among the wives had opted to separate, she would not have separated automatically but would have been separated by the Prophet (peace be with him), as is clear from the words in the previous verse: “I will make a provision for you and send you off (by divorce), a graceful sending.” But the Prophet (peace be with him) would certainly have separated her because as a Prophet it would

not behoove him not to honor the word. After divorce apparently the lady would have stood excluded from the category of the wives, and she would not be forbidden to any other Muslim; for she would have chosen divorce from the Prophet (peace be with him) only for the sake of the world and its adornments of which she had been given the choice, and obviously the option could not be exercised in case she was forbidden to re-marry. On the other hand, the intention of the verse also seems that the Prophet (peace be with him) was not left with any authority to divorce the wives who chose Allah and His Messenger and the Hereafter in preference to the world. For, takhyir had only two sides: if a wife opted for the world, she would be divorced; if she opted for Allah and His Messenger and the Hereafter, she would not be divorced. Obviously, if a lady chose one alternative, the other would become forbidden in her case by itself.

In Islamic law takhyir, in fact, amounts to delegation of the right to obtain divorce. The husband himself gives the wife the choice to stay in wedlock with him or be separated. Here are briefly the injunctions which the jurists have derived from the Quran and Sunnah in this regard:

(1) Once a husband has given this choice to a wife, he can neither withdraw it nor stop her from exercising it. However, it is not necessary that the woman must exercise it. She may choose to remain in wedlock with the husband, or may prefer to separate, or may opt nothing and let the right of divorce be annulled.

(2) There are two conditions of this choice being transferred to the woman: (a) The husband should have given her the right of divorce in clear words, or if there was no clear mention of the divorce, he should have had the intention of giving this right; e.g. if he says, “You have the choice” or “your business is in your own hand,” such indirect words will not transfer the right of divorce to the woman without the intention of the husband. If the woman claims it and the husband states on oath that he had no intention of giving the right of divorce, his statement will be admitted, unless the woman produces evidence to the effect that those words were said during a dispute, or in

connection with divorce, because in that context delegation of the right would mean that the husband had the intention of giving the right of divorce. (b) The woman knows that she has been given the right of divorce. If she was absent, she should receive information of this, and if she is present, she should hear the words. Unless she hears the words, or receives the news, the right will not be transferred to her.

(3) As to the time limit within which the wife has to exercise her right if the husband gives it her absolutely without specifying any limit, there is a difference of opinion among the jurists. Some jurists have expressed the opinion that the woman can exercise the right at the same sitting at which the husband gave it her; if she leaves the place without making a response, or turns her attention to something else which indicates that she does not want to make a response, she forfeits the right invested in her and her choice no longer remains. This is the opinion of Umar, Uthman, Ibn Masud, Jabir bin Abdullah, Atta, Jabir bin Zaid, Mujahid, Shabi, Nakhai, Imam Malik, Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Shafei, Imam Auzai, Sufyan Thauri and Abu Thaur. The other opinion is that her exercise of the choice is not confined to that sitting but she can exercise it even afterwards. This opinion is held by Hasan Basri, Qatadah and Zuhri (may Allah be pleased with them all).

(4) If the husband specifies a time limit and says, for instance, “You have the option for a month or a year, or your business is in your own hand for so long,” the wife would enjoy the option only for that long. However, if he says, “You can exercise this option as and when you like,” her option would be unlimited.

(5) If the woman intends to obtain separation, she should express her intention clearly and definitely. Vague words which do not express the intention clearly will have no effect.

(6) Legally, the husband can give the option to the wife in three forms: (a) He may say, “Your business is in your own hand;” or (b) he may say: “You have the option;” or (c) “You are divorced if you so please.” The legal consequences of each are separate as explained below:

(a) If the husband has said: “Your business is in your own hand," and the woman responds clearly to the

effect that she would opt for separation, it would amount to an irreversible divorce according to the Hanafites. That is, after this the husband will forfeit his right to have her back as his wife. However, they can remarry if they so like after the expiry of the waiting period. And if the husband said, “Your affair is in your own hand to the extent of one divorce,” this will be regarded as the first reversible divorce. That is, the husband can take her back as his wife within the waiting-period. But if the husband had the intention of all the three divorces at the time of delegating to the woman the right of divorce, or mentioned this specifically, the woman’s exercise of the option in such a case would amount to divorce no matter whether she pronounces divorce thrice on herself or says only once that she has chosen separation or divorced herself.

(b) If the husband gives the woman the option to separate with the words: “You have the option,” and the woman opts for separation in clear words, it will amount to one reversible divorce according to the Hanafites even if the husband had the intention of giving option for three divorces. However, if the husband has clearly given option for three divorces, the three divorces will take place only on the woman’s exercise of the option for divorce. According to Imam Shafei, if at the time of giving the option, the husband had the intention of divorce, and the woman opts for separation, it will amount to one reversible divorce. According to Imam Malik, it will amount to three divorces in case the wife had been enjoyed; in case she had not been enjoyed, the husband’s claim to have intended only one divorce will be admitted.

(c) In case the words “You are divorced if you so please” have been used and the woman has opted for divorce, it will be a reversible divorce and not an irreversible one.

(7) If after the husband has given the option for separation, the woman chooses to remain in wedlock, no divorce will take place at all. This is the opinion of Umar, Abdullah bin Masud, Aishah, Abu ad-Darda, Ibn Abbas and Ibn Umar, and the same has been adopted by majority of the jurists. When Masruq

asked Aishah about this, she replied: “The Prophet (peace be with him) had given his wives the option and they chose to continue to live as his wives. Then, was it deemed to be a divorce?” The opinion of Ali and Zaid bin Thabit that has been reported in this regard is that one reversible divorce will take place. But according to another tradition these two great companions also held the opinion that no divorce will take place at all. (May Allah be pleased with them all).

يٰنِسَآءَ النَّبِيِّ مَنْ يَّأْتِ مِنْكُنَّ بِفَاحِشَةٍ مُّبَيِّنَةٍ يُّضٰعَفْ لَهَا الْعَذَابُ ضِعْفَيْنِ ؕ وَ كَانَ ذٰلِكَ عَلَى اللّٰهِ يَسِيْرًا ۝٣٠

(33-30) Wives of the Prophet, if any of you commit flagrant indecency, her chastisement shall be doubled. (43) That is easy for Allah. (44)

(43) This does not mean that there was, God forbid, any chance of the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) wives committing an indecency, but this was meant to make them realize that they were the mothers of the Muslims; therefore, their responsibilities were accordingly very high, and so their moral conduct should be the purest. This is just like Allah’s addressing the Prophet (peace be upon him) to the effect: “If you committed shirk, all your deeds would be rendered vain.” (Surah Az-Zumar: Ayat 65). This also does not mean that there was, God forbid, any chance of the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) committing shirk, but this is meant to make the Prophet (peace be upon him) realize, and through him the common Muslims, that shirk, is a most heinous crime which must be guarded against most judiciously.

(44) That is, “You should not be under the delusion that your being the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) wives will protect you from Allah’s punishment, or that it will be difficult for Allah to call you to account on account of your high rank and position in the world.”

وَ مَنْ يَّقْنُتْ مِنْكُنَّ لِلّٰهِ وَ رَسُوْلِهٖ وَ تَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا نُّؤْتِهَآ اَجْرَهَا مَرَّتَيْنِ ۙ وَ اَعْتَدْنَا لَهَا رِزْقًا كَرِيْمًا ۝٣١

(33-31) But whoever of you is obedient to Allah and His Messenger and does good deeds, Allah will double her reward. (45) We have prepared for her a generous provision.

(45) The reason for giving a double punishment for a sin and a double reward for a good work is that those whom Allah honors with a high rank in society generally become the leaders of men and the majority of the people follow them for good or for evil. Thus, their evil does not remain their own evil but becomes the cause of a people's degeneration, and their goodness does not remain their own goodness but becomes the cause of the true success of many other people also. Therefore, when they commit evil they are punished for their own as well as for others degeneration, and when they do good they are not only rewarded for their own good works but also for this that they also guided others to do good.

This verse also gives the principle that the greater the degree of prohibition and trust in respect of somebody and something the greater and more serious will be the crime of violating that prohibition and trust and the greater will be the punishment for it. For example, drinking in the mosque is a much more serious crime than drinking privately in the house, and therefore, it will entail a severer punishment. Likewise, committing adultery with the prohibited relations is a far more serious crime than committing it with another woman, and therefore, will call for a severer punishment.

يٰنِسَآءَ النَّبِيِّ لَسْتُنَّ كَاَحَدٍ مِّنَ النِّسَآءِ اِنِ اتَّقَيْتُنَّ فَلَا تَخْضَعْنَ بِالْقَوْلِ فَيَطْمَعَ الَّذِيْ فِيْ قَلْبِهٖ مَرَضٌ وَّقُلْنَ قَوْلًا مَّعْرُوْفًا ۝٣٢

(33-32) Wives of the Prophet, you are not like other women. (46) If you fear Allah, do not be too complaisant in your speech lest those with diseased hearts should covet you; but speak in a straight forward manner. (47)

(46) The verses from here to the end of the paragraph are those with which the commandments of hijab were introduced in Islam. In these verses, though, only the wives of the Prophet

(peace be upon him) have been addressed, the intention is to enforce reforms in all the Muslim houses. The object of addressing the Prophet's (peace be upon him) wives in particular is that when a pure way of life will start from his house, it will be followed by the women of all other Muslim houses as well, because this house was looked upon by the Muslims as a model to follow. Some people, when they see that these verses have been addressed only to the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him), assert that these commandments were only meant for them. But when one reads what follows in these verses, he feels that there is nothing which might have been meant particularly for the wives and not for the other Muslim women. Could Allah have intended only this that the wives alone should be free from un-cleanliness and they alone should obey Allah and His Prophet (peace be upon him) and they alone should offer the Salat and pay the Zakat? If this could not be the intention, then how could the command for them to stay in their houses and avoid displaying the fineries and abstain from talking to the other men in an alluring voice be meant particularly for them to the exclusion of all other Muslim women? Is there any rational proof on the basis of which some commands in one and the same context and series be regarded as general and some others as particular and special?

As for the sentence, "You are not like any other women," it also does not mean that the other women should come out in full makeup and should talk to the other men coquettishly and flirt with them, but "as for you, you should not adopt such a conduct." The style, to the contrary, is such as if a gentleman would tell his child, "You are not like the common children of the street: you should not use abusive language." From this no sensible person would ever conclude that the speaker regarded only his own child using abusive language as bad; as for others he would not mind if they used abusive language.

(47) That is, "There is no harm if the other man is spoken to in case of a genuine need, but on such an occasion the woman's tone and manner of speech should be such as does not let the other man think that he could cherish any false hope from her. There should be no undue softness in her tone, no allurement in

her conversation, no consciously affected mellowness in her voice, which should excite the male hearer’s emotions and encourage him to make advances.”

About such a manner of speech Allah clearly says that this does not behoove a woman who has any fear of God in her heart and desire to avoid evil. In other words, this is the way and manner of the wicked and unchaste woman’s speech and not of the believing pious woman’s speech: If this verse is read together with verse 31 of Surah An-Nur, in which Allah says: “They should not stamp the ground in walking lest their hidden decoration is revealed,” the intention of the Lord clearly seems to be that the women should not attract other men by their voice or the jingle of their ornaments unnecessarily, and if at all they have to speak to the other men, they should speak to them in an unaffected tone and manner. That is why it is forbidden for the woman to pronounce the call to the Prayer. Moreover, if a woman is attending a congregational Prayer and the Imam commits a mistake, she is not permitted to say Subhan-Allah like the males but should only tap her hands to call the imam's attention to the error.

Now just consider this: When Islam disallows the woman to talk to other men in a soft and sweet tone and even forbids her to produce her voice before the other men without a genuine need, will it approve her to appear on the stage and sing, dance, flirt and behave coquettishly? Will it permit her to sing love songs over the radio and excite the people’s emotions by presenting sweet melodies full of obscene themes? Will it permit that she should play the roles of the wives and sweethearts of others in dramas? Or that the women should be made the air hostesses and be especially trained to charm and allure the passengers? Or that they should visit clubs and attend social functions and gatherings in full makeup and mix freely with men and have fun and a good time with them? From which Quran has this culture been derived? For, the Quran that was sent down by God there is to be found no hint as to the admissibility of this sort of culture.

وَقَرْنَ فِيْ بُيُوْتِكُنَّ وَلَا تَبَرَّجْنَ تَبَرُّجَ الْجَاهِلِيَّةِ الْاُوْلٰى وَاَقِمْنَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَاٰتِيْنَ الزَّكٰوةَ وَاَطِعْنَ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهٗ ؕ اِنَّمَا يُرِيْدُ اللّٰهُ لِيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ الرِّجْسَ اَهْلَ الْبَيْتِ وَيُطَهِّرَكُمْ تَطْهِيْرًا ﴿٣٣﴾

(33-33) And stay in your homes [48] and do not go about displaying your allurements as in the former Time of Ignorance. [49] Establish Prayer, give Zakah, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Allah only wishes to remove uncleanness from you, O members of the (Prophet's) household, and to purify you completely. [50]

(48) The word qarna in the original is derived from qarar according to some lexicographers and from waqar according to others. In the first sense, it will mean: “settle down, stick firmly” and in the second sense: “live peacefully, sit with dignity.” In both the cases the verse means to impress that the woman’s real sphere of activity is her home; she should carry out her functions within that sphere peacefully, and she should come out of the house only in case of a genuine need. This meaning is clear from the words of the verse itself and the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) Ahadith also impress it even more forcefully. Hafiz Abu Bakr Bazzar has related on the authority of Anas that the women made a submission to the Prophet (peace be upon him), saying: “All kinds of virtues have been secured by the men: they fight and accomplish great deeds in the way of Allah. What should we do that we may also get a reward equal to that of the warriors?” The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: “The one who sits in her house from among you; will attain the reward of the warriors.” What he meant was: The warrior can fight confidently and with full peace of the mind in the way of Allah only when he is sure that all is well at home. His wife is there to look after the house and the children, and there is no cause for him to worry that she will betray him in his absence. The woman who will provide him this satisfaction and peace of the mind will be an equal partner with him in his fighting though she will be sitting back at home. According to another tradition that Bazzar and Tirmidhi have related on the authority of Abdullah bin Masud, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “The woman must remain veiled and concealed. When she comes out of her house, Satan stares at her.

And she is closer to Allah's mercy when she is inside her house." See (E.N. 49 of Surah An-Nur).

In the presence of such a clear and express command of the Quran, it is not at all permissible that the Muslim women should seek membership of the councils and parliaments; that they should run after social activities outside the house; that they should work side by side with men in the government offices, should get education along with boys in the colleges, serve as nurses in the male wards of hospitals, should be employed as hostesses in the airplanes and rail cars, and should be sent abroad for education and training. The greatest argument that is given in support of the permissibility of the women's outdoor activities is that Aishah (may Allah be pleased with her) had taken part in the battle of the Jamul. But the people who present this argument perhaps do not know what was Aishah's own opinion in this regard. Abdullah bin Ahmad bin Hanbal has related in his Zawa id az-Zuhd and Ibn Mundhir, Ibn Abi Shaibah and Ibn Saad in their own books the tradition from Masruq, saying that when Aishah during her recitation of the Quran would reach this verse (wa qarna fi buyut-i kunna), she would start crying involuntarily; so much so that her head-wrapper would become wet, for this reminded her of the error that she had committed in the battle of the Jamul.

(49) In this verse two important words have been used, which must be understood for the proper understanding of its intention. They are tabarruj and jahiliyyat al-ula.

The word tabarruj in Arabic means to become manifest and appear openly before others. The Arabs use the word baraj for every conspicuous and elevated object. A burj (tower) is so called because of its prominence and elevation. A sailingboat is called barijah, because its sails become visible from a distance. The word tabarruj when used in respect of a woman will have three meanings:

(1) that she should show the charms of her face and body before the people. (2) That she should display the adornments of her dress and ornaments before others. (3) That she should make

herself conspicuous by her gait and figure and coquetry. The same explanation of this word has been given by the leading lexicographers and commentators. Mujahid, Qatadah and Ibn Abi Nujaih say: Tabarruj means to walk in a vain, alluring and coquettish manner. Muqatil says: It means a woman's displaying of her necklaces, ear-rings and bosom. Al-Mubarrad says: That a woman should reveal her adornments which she should conceal. Abu Ubaidah comments: This that a woman should make herself conspicuous by display of her body and dress to attract the attention of men.

The word jahiliyyat has been used at three other places in the Quran besides this, in (Surah Ale-Imran: Ayat 154), where about those who shirk fighting in the way of Allah, it has been said: "They began to cherish about Allah thoughts of Ignorance Uahiljyyat, which were void of the truth. And in (Surah Al-Maidah: Ayat 50), where about those who want to be judged by their own law instead of the law of Allah, it has been said: "Do they desire to be judged by the laws of ignorance (Jahiliyyat)?" and in (Surah Al-Fath: Ayat 26), where the prejudice of the people of Makkah due to which they did not permit the Muslims to perform Umrah, has been called as "the haughty spirit of paganism (jahiliyyat). According to a Hadith once Abu ad-Darda in the heat of a quarrel abused another person in respect of his mother. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) heard of it, he remarked: You still have jahiliyyat in you. According to another Hadith the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Three things show jahiliyyat: to taunt the lineage of another person, to take omens from the movement of the stars, and to mourn over the dead. All these customs show that jahiliyyat in the Islamic terminology is every such conduct which goes against Islamic culture and civilization and Islamic morality and etiquette and Islamic way of thinking and behavior. Thus, jahiliyyat al-ula would mean all those evils in which the Arabs of the pre-Islamic days and the people of the entire world were involved.

This explanation makes it abundantly clear that what Allah forbids women is to move out of their houses showing off their physical charms and beauty. He instructs them to stay in their

houses because their real sphere of activity is their home and not the world outside. However, if they have to move out of the house for an outdoor duty, they should not move out as the women used to do in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance. For it does not behoove the women of a Muslim society to walk out fully embellished to make their face and figure conspicuous by adornments and tightfitting or transparent dresses, and to walk coquettishly. These are the ways of ignorance which Islam does not approve. Now everybody can see for himself whether the culture which is being made popular in our country is the culture of Islam, according to the Quran, or the culture of ignorance.

(50) The context in which this verse occurs makes it manifest that the word ahl al-bait (people of the house) here implies the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him), because the address begins with: “O wives of the Prophet,” and they are the addressees in the whole discourse preceding it as well as following it. Moreover, the word ahl al-bait in Arabic is used precisely in the sense in which the word “household” is used in English, which includes both a man’s wife and children. No one would exclude the wife from the “household.” The Quran itself has used this word at two other places besides this, and at both the wife is included in its sense, rather as the most important member of the family. In Surah Hud, when the angels give the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) the good news of the birth of a son, his wife exclaims: “Shall I bear a child now when I have grown too old, and this husband of mine has also become old?” The angels say: “What! Are you surprised at Allah's decree, O people of Abraham’s household? Allah’s mercy and blessings are upon you.” In Surah Al-Qasas, when the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) reaches the Pharaoh's house as a suckling, and the Pharaoh’s wife is in search of a suitable nurse for the child, the Prophet Moses’ (peace be upon him) sister says, “Shall I tell you of a household whose people will bring him up for you and look after him well?” Thus, the Arabic idiom and the usage of the Quran and the context of this verse, all point clearly to the fact that the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) wives as well as his children are included in his ahl albait; rather the more correct thing is that the verse is actually addressed to the wives and the

children become included in the household only because of the sense of the word. That is why according to Ibn Abbas and Urwah bin Zubair and Ikrimah, the word ahl al-bait in this verse implies the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

But if somebody says that the word ahl al-bait has been used only for the wives and none else can be included in it, it will also be wrong. Not only this that the word “household” includes all the members of a man’s family, but the Prophet (peace be upon him) has himself explained that this includes even himself. According to Ibn Abi Hatim, once when Aishah was asked about Ali, she said, “Do you ask me about the person who was among the most loved ones of the Prophet and whose wife was the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) daughter and most beloved to him?” Then she related the event when the Prophet (peace be upon him) had called Ali and Fatimah and Hasan and Husain (may Allah be pleased with them all) and covered them all with a sheet of cloth and prayed: “O Allah, these are my household, remove uncleanness from them and make them pure.” Aishah says, “I said: I also am included among your household (i.e. I may also be covered under the sheet and prayed for).” Thereupon the Prophet replied: “You stay out: you, of course, are already included.” A great many Ahadith bearing on this subject have been related by traditionalists like Muslim, Tirmidhi, Ahmad, Ibn Jarir, Hakim, Baihaqi, etc. on the authority of Abu Said Khudri, Aishah, Anas, Umm Salamah, Wathilah bin Aqsa and some other companions, which show that the Prophet (peace be upon him) declared Ali and Fatimah and their two sons as his ahl al-bait. Therefore, the view of those who exclude them from the ahl al-bait is not correct.

Similarly the view of those people also is not correct, who, on the basis of the above cited Ahadith, regard the wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as excluded from his ahl al-bait. In the first place, anything which has been clearly stated in the Quran cannot be contradicted on the basis of a Hadith. Secondly, these Ahadith also do not have the meaning that is put on them. As related in some traditions that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not cover Aishah and Umm Salamah under the sheet of

cloth which he put on the four members of his family, does not mean that he had excluded those ladies from his “household.” But it means that the wives were already included in ahl al-bait, because the Quran, in fact, had addressed them as ahl albait. The Prophet (peace be upon him), however, thought that the apparent words of the Quran might cause somebody the misunderstanding about these members that they were excluded from the ahl al-bait. Therefore, he felt the need for clarification in their case and not in the case of his wives.

A section of the people have not only misconstrued this verse to the extent that they have made the word ahl al-bait exclusively applicable to Ali and Fatimah and their children to the exclusion of the wives, but have gone even further and concluded wrongly from its words “Allah only intends to remove uncleanliness from you and purify you completely”, that Ali and Fatimah and their children are infallible like the Prophets of Allah. They say that “uncleanliness” implies error and sin, and, as Allah says, these ahl al-bait have been purified of this, whereas the words of the verse do not say that uncleanliness has been removed from them and they have been purified. But the words are to the effect: “Allah intends to remove uncleanliness from you and purify you completely.” The context also does not tell that the object here is to mention the virtues and excellences of the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) household. On the contrary, they have been advised here what they should do and what they should not, because Allah intends to purify them. In other words, they have been told that if they adopted such and such an attitude and way of life, they will be blessed with cleanliness, otherwise not. However, if the words “Allah intends to remove uncleanliness from you” are taken to mean that Allah has made them infallible, then is no reason why all the Muslims who perform their ablutions before offering the Prayer are not held as infallible, because about them also Allah says: “But Allah wills to purify you and complete His blessings upon you.” (Surah Al-Maidah: Ayat 6).

وَ ا ذ ۡکُ رۡنَ مَا یُ تۡ لٰی فِیۡ بُیُوۡتِکُنَّ مِنۡ اٰیٰتِ اللّٰہِ وَ ا لۡحِکۡمَۃِ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰہَ کَانَ لَطِیۡفًا خَبِیۡرًا ﴿۳۴﴾

(33-34) Remember the Signs of Allah and the words of wisdom which are rehearsed in your homes. (51) Verily Allah is All-Subtle, (52) All-Aware.

(51) The word wadhkurna in the original has two meanings: Remember and mention. According to the first meaning the verse would mean: “O wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him), you should never forget that yours is the house from where the world is being instructed in divine revelations and wisdom, therefore, your responsibility is very great. Let it not happen that the people might see specimens of ignorance in this very house.” According to the second meaning, it would mean: “O wives of the Prophet (peace be upon him), you should mention and relate before the people whatever you hear and see, for by virtue of your close and constant social association and attachment with the Prophet (peace be upon him) you will know and experience many such things which the other people. will not be able to know by any other means than you.”

Two things have been mentioned in this verse: (1) The Revelations of Allah; and (2) the wise sayings.

The revelations of Allah are the verses of Allah’s Book, but hikmat (wisdom) is a comprehensive word which includes all those wise things which the Prophet (peace be upon him) taught the people. This word may also imply the teachings of the Book of Allah, but there is no reason why it should be made exclusively applicable to them. It inevitably includes the wisdom that the Prophet (peace be upon him) taught by his pure character and by his sayings besides reciting the verses of the Quran. Some people, only on the basis that the word ma yutla (that which is recited) has been used in the verse, make the assertion that the “Revelations of Allah” and "Wisdom" imply only the Quran, for the word “recitation” as a term is specifically used for the recitation of the Quran. But this reasoning is absolutely wrong. The use of the word “recitation” specifically as a term for the recitation of the Quran or the Book of Allah is the work of the people of the later ages. The Quran has not used this word as a term. In (Surah Al-Baqarah: Ayat 102), this same word has been used for the incantation

of the magical formulas which the satans falsely attributed to the Prophet Solomon and taught the people. (“They followed that which the satans recited attributing it to the kingdom of Solomon.”) This shows that the Quran uses this word in its lexical meaning, and does not specify it for reciting the verses of the Book of Allah.

(52) “Well Acquainted”: “Knower of even the most secret and hidden things.”

اِنَّ الۡمُسۡلِمِيۡنَ وَالۡمُسۡلِمٰتِ وَالۡمُؤۡمِنِيۡنَ وَالۡمُؤۡمِنٰتِ وَالۡقٰنِتِيۡنَ وَالۡقٰنِتٰتِ وَالصّٰدِقِيۡنَ وَ
الصّٰدِقٰتِ وَالصّٰبِرِيۡنَ وَالصّٰبِرٰتِ وَالۡخٰشِعِيۡنَ وَالۡخٰشِعٰتِ وَالۡمُتَصَدِّقِيۡنَ وَالۡمُتَصَدِّقٰتِ
وَالصَّآئِمِيۡنَ وَالصّٰٓئِمٰتِ وَالۡحٰفِظِيۡنَ فُرُوۡجَهُمۡ وَالۡحٰفِظٰتِ وَالذّٰكِرِيۡنَ اللّٰهَ كَثِيۡرًا وَّالذّٰكِرٰتِ
اَعَدَّ اللّٰهُ لَهُمۡ مَّغۡفِرَةً وَّاَجۡرًا عَظِيۡمًا ﴿۳۵﴾

(33-35) Surely (53) the men who submit (to Allah) and the women who submit (to Allah), (54) the men who have faith and the women who have faith, (55) the men who are obedient and the women who are obedient, (56) the men who are truthful and the women who are truthful; (57) the men who are steadfast and the women who are steadfast, (58) the men who humble themselves (to Allah) and the women who humble themselves (to Allah), (59) the men who give alms and the women who give alms, (60) the men who fast and the women who fast, (61) the men who guard their chastity and the women who guard their chastity, (62) the men who remember Allah much and the women who remember Allah much: (63) for them has Allah prepared forgiveness and a mighty reward. (64)

(53) Presentation of this theme immediately after the foregoing paragraph contains a subtle allusion to the fact that the instructions given above to the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) wives are not exclusively meant for them but the Muslim society as a whole should reform itself in accordance with them.

(54) Who have surrendered themselves to Allah: Who have accepted Islam as a code of life for themselves, and have decided to follow it in their lives, and who have no wish to resist the

Islamic way of life and thought, but have adopted the way of obedience and submission to it.

(55) Who are believing: Whose obedience is not merely outward, nor unwilling but who sincerely regard the guidance given by Islam as based on the truth. Whose faith is that the way shown by the Quran and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the only right and straight way. And in following which alone lies their true success. That which has been declared as wrong by Allah and His Prophet (peace be upon him) is certainly wrong. And that which has been declared as right by Allah and His Prophet (peace be upon him) is certainly right. Also, psychologically and intellectually, they do not regard as improper any injunction that has been enjoined by the Quran and Sunnah, and do not remain on the lookout to change it somehow to suit their own desires or mold it according to the current trends of the world, avoiding at the same time the blame that they have effected a change in the command given by Allah and His Prophet (peace be upon him). The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) has described the true state of faith in a Hadith in these words:

"He who reconciled himself to Allah as his Lord and to Islam as his way of Life and to Muhammad as his Messenger, has the true taste of faith." (Sahih Muslim).

In another Hadith, he has explained it thus:

"None of you becomes a believer until the desires of his self-become subordinate to what I have brought." (Sharh-as-Sunnah).

(56) That is, they do not rest content with mere belief but are obedient practically also. They are not the sort of the people who would honestly believe that what Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) have commanded was true but would violate it in practice: that they would sincerely regard what Allah and His Messenger have forbidden as bad but would go on following the same in practical life.

(57) That is, they are truthful in their speech and honest in thou dealings. They do not deal in lies, deceptions, frauds and forgeries. They utter with their tongues only what their conscience approves as true. They practice and perform only what they honestly find to be in accordance with righteousness and truth, and they are honest in all their dealings with others.

(58) That is, they patiently and steadfastly bear and face all the obstacles, dangers, difficulties and losses that they might have to encounter in following the right way taught by Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) and in establishing Allah’s religion in the world; no fear and no temptation and no desire of the self can succeed in diverting them from the right way.

(59) That is, they are free from pride, vanity and haughtiness: they have full understanding of the reality that they arc servants and they have no other position than that of servitude. Therefore, their hearts as well as their bodies remain bowed before Allah, dominated by fear of Him. They never display the attitude which is the hallmark of the lives of those who are fearless of God and arc involved in arrogance. From the sequence it appears that the mention of Khushu (expression of humility) in particular along with the general attitude of the fear of God implies the Prayer, for the mention of the practice of charity and fast has been made just after it.

(60) This does not only imply payment of the obligatory Zakat, but it also includes general charity. It means to say that they spend their wealth freely in the way of Allah and they are not at all niggardly in the matter of helping the servants of Allah as much as they can. No orphan and no sick or afflicted person, no weak or disabled person, no poor and needy one remains deprived of their support in their dwelling; and if there arises the need for monetary help for promoting the cause of Allah’s religion, they are never miserly in spending their wealth for that purpose.

(61) This includes both the obligatory and the voluntary fasts.

(62) This has two meanings: (1) They refrain from adultery, and (2) they avoid nudity. One should also note that nudity does not only mean being naked but it is also nudity to put on a thin dress which shows the body, or is so tight fitting that it reveals all the outlines of the body.

(63) Remember Allah much means that one should mention Allah's name in one way or other at all times in every business of life. Man cannot develop such a state of the mind unless the thought of God becomes deeply embedded in his heart. When this idea has passed beyond his conscious mind and settled deep in his subconscious and unconscious mind, then only he will remember and mention God's name in whatever he does and in whatever he says. He will begin with bismillah when he eats and say al-hamdu lillah when he finishes. He will remember Allah when he goes to bed, and mention Allah's name when he gets up. In his conversation also he will again and again pronounce bismillah, al-hamdu-lillalh, insha-Allah, masha Allah, etc. and ask for Allah's help in every matter, and thank Him for every blessing. He will seek His mercy in every affliction, and turn to Him in every trouble. He will fear Him on encountering every evil, and ask for His forgiveness when he happens to have committed an error and will pray to Him for fulfillment of every need. In short, in every state and in every business of life his function will be to remember Allah.

This, in fact, is the essence of the Islamic life. For all other acts of worship there is a prescribed time when they are performed, and one is free when one has performed them. But this is the worship which has no special time; it has to be performed constantly so that it links up the man's life with Allah and His service permanently. The other worships and religious acts themselves also become meaningful only when the heart of man remains inclined to Allah not only at the time when the act is actually being carried out but at all times when the tongue is uttering Allah's name constantly. In such a state as this worship and religious acts develop and flourish in a man's life precisely in the same manner as a plant grows in a congenial climate and environment. Contrary to this, the example of the religious services and worships which are carried out only on special times

and occasions in the life which is devoid of this constant remembrance of Allah is of the plant which has been planted in an un-congenial climate, and which is growing only due to the special attention and care of the gardener. This very thing has been explained by the Prophet (peace be upon him) in a Hadith, thus:

Muadh bin Anas Juhani relates that a person asked the Prophet (peace be upon him) of Allah, “Who among those who fight in the way of Allah will get the highest reward?” He replied: “The one who remembers Allah the most.” The man asked: “Who among the observers of the fast will get the highest reward?” He replied: “The one who remembers Allah the most.” The man then asked the same question about the performer of the Prayer, the payer of the Zakat and charities and the performer of Hajj and the Prophet (peace be upon him) in every case gave the same answer, saying: He who remembers Allah the most. (Musnad Ahmad).

(64) This verse plainly tells what qualities and characteristics are of real worth in the sight of Allah. These are the basic values of Islam which have been compressed into one sentence. As regards these, there is no difference between the man and woman. However, as for their life activity, the two sexes have separate spheres to function. The males have to function in some particular spheres and the females in some others. But if they possess these qualities and characteristics equally, Allah will raise them to equal ranks and bless them with equal rewards. It will in no way affect their rank and reward if one carried out household chores and the other performed the duties of caliphate and enforced the Shariah injunctions; one raised children in the house and the other went to the battlefield and fought for the sake of Allah and His religion.

وَ مَا كَانَ لِمُؤۡمِنٍ وَّ لَا مُؤۡمِنَةٍ اِذَا قَضَى اللّٰهُ وَ رَسُوۡلُهٗۤ اَمۡرًا اَنۡ يَّكُوۡنَ لَهُمُ
الۡخِيَرَةُ مِنۡ اَمۡرِهِمۡ ؕ وَ مَنۡ يَّعۡصِ اللّٰهَ وَ رَسُوۡلَهٗ فَقَدۡ ضَلَّ ضَلٰلًا مُّبِيۡنًا ؕ ۳۶

(33-36) It (65) does not behoove a believer, male or female, that when Allah and His Messenger have decided an affair

they should exercise their choice. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger has strayed to manifest error. (66)

(65) From here begin the verses which were revealed in connection with the Prophet's (peace be upon him) marriage with Zainab (may Allah be pleased with her).

(66) Ibn Abbas, Qatadah, Ikrimah and Muqatil bin Hayyan say that this verse was revealed at the time when the Prophet (peace be upon him) proposed to Zainab for Zaid, and Zainab and her relatives did not agree. According to Ibn Abbas, when the Prophet (peace be upon him) made the proposal, Zainab said, "I am better than him in lineage." Ibn Saad says that she also said, "I do not approve him for myself. I am a Quraishite by birth. The same sort of disapproval was expressed by her brother, Abdullah bin Jahsh, because Zaid was a freed slave of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and Zainab was the daughter of his paternal aunt, Umaimah bint Abdul Muttalib. They did not like the Prophet (peace be upon him) to propose a girl of a noble Quraishite family, who was none other than his own first cousin, for his freed slave. At this, this verse was sent down and on hearing it Zainab and all her relatives yielded to the proposal at once. Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) married them, paid ten diners and 60 dirhams from his own pocket as dower on behalf of Zaid, provided the bridal dress and sent some articles of food for domestic use.

Though this verse was revealed on a special occasion, the injunction given in it is the cardinal principle of the constitutional law of Islam, and it applies to the entire Islamic system of life. According to it no Muslim individual or nation, or institution, or court or parliament or state, is entitled to use its own freedom of opinion in a matter in which Allah and His Prophet (peace be upon him) have already given a decision. To be a Muslim means to surrender one's freedom of opinion and action before Allah and His Messenger. It would be a contradiction in terms if a person or a nation claimed to be Muslim and then reserved for itself the freedom of choice and action. No sensible person can think of combining the two contradictory attitudes together. The one who desires to remain a Muslim will inevitably have to bow down to

the command of Allah and His Prophet (peace be upon him), and the one who is not inclined to bow will have to admit that he is not a Muslim. If he does not admit he will be regarded as a hypocrite both by God and by the people even though he might proclaim to be a Muslim at the top of his voice.

وَ اِذۡ تَقُوۡلُ لِلَّذِیۡۤ اَنۡعَمَ اللّٰہُ عَلَیۡہِ وَ اَنۡعَمۡتَ عَلَیۡہِ اَمۡسِکۡ عَلَیۡکَ زَوۡجَکَ وَ اتَّقِ اللّٰہَ وَ تُخۡفِیۡ فِیۡ نَفۡسِکَ مَا اللّٰہُ مُبۡدِیۡہِ وَ تَخۡشَی النَّاسَ ۚ وَ اللّٰہُ اَحَقُّ اَنۡ تَخۡشٰہُ ؕ فَلَمَّا قَضٰی زَیۡدٌ مِّنۡہَا وَطَرًا زَوَّجۡنٰکَہَا لِکَیۡ لَا یَکُوۡنَ عَلَی الۡمُؤۡمِنِیۡنَ حَرَجٌ فِیۡۤ اَزۡوَاجِ اَدۡعِیَآئِہِمۡ اِذَا قَضَوۡا مِنۡہُنَّ وَطَرًا ؕ وَ کَانَ اَمۡرُ اللّٰہِ مَفۡعُوۡلًا ﴿۳۷﴾

(33-37) (O Prophet), [67] call to mind when you said to him [68] whom Allah had favored and you had favored: “Cleave to your wife and fear Allah,” [69] and you concealed within yourself for fear of people what Allah was to reveal, although Allah has greater right that you fear Him. [70] So when Zayd had accomplished what he would of her, [71] We gave her in marriage to you [72] so that there should not be any constraint for the believers regarding the wives of their adopted sons after they had accomplished whatever they would of them. [73] And Allah's command was bound to be accomplished.

(67) The discourse from here to (Verse 48) was sent down after the Prophet (peace be upon him) had married Zainab, and the hypocrites, the Jews and the mushriks had started a relentless propaganda campaign against him. While studying these verses one should bear in mind the fact that this divine discourse was not meant for the instruction of the enemies who were engaged in a willful campaign of vilification and slander and falsehood to defame the Prophet (peace be upon him) intentionally and to satisfy their rancor. But its real object was to protect the Muslims against the influence of their campaign and to safeguard them against doubts and suspicions. Evidently, the word of Allah could not satisfy the unbelievers. It could give peace of mind only to those who knew and believed it to be Allah’s word. There was a danger that those righteous people also might be confused and influenced by the objections that were being raised by their enemies. Therefore, on the one hand, Allah removed all possible doubts from their minds, and on the other, taught the Muslims as

well as the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself how they should conduct themselves under the circumstances.

(68) It refers to Zaid as has been mentioned clearly below. In order to understand how Allah and the Prophet (peace be upon him) had favored him, it is necessary here to relate his story briefly. He was the son of Harithah bin Shurahbil, a person of the Kalb tribe, and his mother, Suda bint Thalabah, was from the Bani Maan, a branch of the Tay tribe. When he was eight years old, she took him along to her parents. There the people of Bani Qain bin Jasr raided their camp, plundered their goods and took some men prisoners including Zaid. Then they sold Zaid at the fair of Ukiiz near Taif. His buyer was Hakim bin Hizam, a nephew of Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her). Hakim brought him to Makkah and presented him to his paternal aunt. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) married Khadijah, he found Zaid in her service and was so impressed by his good manners and conduct that he asked her to give Zaid to him. Thus, this fortunate boy entered the service of the best of men, whom Allah, after a few years, was going to appoint a Prophet (peace be upon him). Zaid at that time was 15 years old. Afterwards, when his father and uncle came to know that their child was at Makkah, they came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and requested him to return him in exchange for a payment. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, “I shall call the boy and leave it to him whether he would like to go with you or stay with me. If he chose to go, I would take no payment but would let him go with you. However, if he chose to stay back, I am not the one who would send away a person who would like to stay with me.” They said, “This is perfectly right and just. Please ask the boy.” The Prophet (peace be upon him) called Zaid and asked him: “Do you know these two gentlemen?” He said, “Yes, this is my father and this is my uncle.” The Prophet (peace be upon him) then said, “Well, you know them as well as me. You have the choice to go with them, or stay with me if you so desire.” He said, “I have no wish to leave you and go with anyone else.” His father and uncle said: “Zaid, will you prefer slavery to freedom, and choose to stay with others in preference to your parents and family?” He replied, “After what I have seen of this person, I cannot prefer anything else of the world over

him.” Hearing this reply, the father and uncle of Zaid were reconciled to his remaining with the Prophet (peace be upon him). The Prophet (peace be upon him) set Zaid free immediately and proclaimed before a gathering of the Quraish in the Kabah, “Bear witness that hence forth Zaid is my son: he will receive inheritance from me and I from him.” Thereafter, he began to be called Zaid bin Muhammad by the people. All this happened before the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) advent as a Prophet. Then, when he was blessed with Prophethood by Allah, there were four persons who accepted his claim to it without a moment’s hesitation as soon as they heard of it from him. They were Khadijah, Zaid, Ali and Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with them all). Zaid was 30 years old then, and had already spent 15 years in the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) service. In the fourth year after Hijrah, the Prophet (peace be upon him) married him to his first cousin Zainab, paid her dower on his behalf and provided them with necessary articles for setting up the house.

This is to what Allah has alluded in the verse, saying: “Upon whom Allah has bestowed favor, and upon whom you (O Muhammad) have done favor.”

(69) These words were said when the relations between Zaid and Zainab had become very strained, and after making repeated complaints Zaid had finally told the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he intended to divorce her. Although Zainab had accepted to be married to him in obedience to Allah and His Messenger’s command, she could not overcome her feeling that Zaid was a freed slave, who had been brought up by her own family, and she in spite of being the daughter of a noble Arab family, had been wedded to him. Due to this feeling she could never regard Zaid as her equal in matrimonial life, and this caused more and more bitterness between them. Thus after a little more than a year the marriage ended in divorce.

(70) Some people have misconstrued this sentence to mean this: The Prophet (peace be upon him) desired to marry Zainab and wanted that Zaid should divorce her. But when Zaid came to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said that he wanted to

divorce his wife, the Prophet (peace be upon him) stopped him from this only halfheartedly. At this Allah said: “You were keeping hidden in your heart that which Allah intended to reveal.” The real meaning, however, is contrary to this. If this the sentence is read with (Verses 1, 2, 3 and7 of this Surah), one can clearly see that in the very days when bitterness was increasing between Zaid and his wife, Allah had hinted to His Prophet (peace be upon him) that when Zaid had divorced his wife, he would have to marry the divorced lady. But since the Prophet (peace be upon him) knew what it meant to marry the divorced wife of the adopted son in the contemporary Arab society, and that too at a time when apart from a handful of the Muslims the entire country had become jealous of him, he was hesitant to take any step in that direction. That is why when Zaid expressed his intention to divorce his wife, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him, “Fear Allah and do not divorce your wife.” What he meant by this was that Zaid should not divorce his wife so that he was saved from facing the trial, otherwise in case the divorce was pronounced he would have to comply with the command, and thus provoke a severe storm of criticism and vilification against himself. But when the Prophet (peace be upon him) deliberately forbade Zaid to divorce his wife so that he himself might be saved from what he feared would cause him defamation, Allah found this below the high position that He wanted His Prophet to enjoy, whereas Allah intended to effect a great reform through this marriage of the Prophet. The words “And you feared the people, while Allah has more right that you should fear Him,” clearly point to the same theme.

The same explanation of this verse has been given by Imam Zain-ul-Aabedin Ali bin Husain (may Allah be pleased with him). He says, Allah had indicated to His Prophet (peace be upon him) that Zainab would be included among his wives. But when Zaid complained about her to him, the Prophet (peace be upon him) admonished him to fear Allah and keep his wife. At this Allah said to His Prophet, “I had informed you that I would give Zainab you to in marriage. But when you were forbidding Zaid to divorce his wife, you were hiding that which Allah was going to reveal.” (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Kathir on the authority of Ibn Abi Hatim).

Allama Alusi in his Ruh-al-Maani has also given the same meaning of it. He says, “This is an expression of displeasure on abandoning the better course, which was that the Prophet (peace be upon him) should have kept quiet, or should have told Zaid to do as he liked. The displeasure amounted to this: “Why did you tell Zaid to keep his wife, whereas I had informed you beforehand that Zainab would be included among your wives?”

(71) That is, Zaid divorced his wife and her waiting period came to an end. The words “So when Zaid had fulfilled his desire of her” by themselves give the meaning that Zaid was left with no desire attached to her. And this state of affairs does not appear on mere pronouncement of the divorce, because even during the waiting period the husband can take his wife back if he has any interest in her; and the husband also has this desire left with the divorced wife that it should become known whether she is pregnant or not. Therefore, the desire of her former husband with the divorced wife comes to an end only on the expiry of the waiting period.

(72) These words are explicit that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had married Zainab not because of any personal desire but under the command of Allah.

(73) These words clearly indicate that Allah accomplished this social reform through the Prophet (peace be upon him) to effect a great change which could not be enforced by any other means. There was no way to put an end to the wrong customs that had become prevalent in Arabia in respect of the adopted relations but that Allah’s Messenger himself should take initiative to abolish them. Therefore, Allah arranged this marriage not for the sake of adding a wife to the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) household but for enforcing an important social change.

مَا كَانَ عَلَى النَّبِیِّ مِنۡ حَرَجٍ فِیۡمَا فَرَضَ اللّٰهُ لَهٗ ؕ سُنَّةَ اللّٰهِ فِی الَّذِیۡنَ خَلَوۡا مِنۡ قَبۡلُ ؕ وَ
كَانَ اَمۡرُ اللّٰهِ قَدَرًا مَّقۡدُوۡرَا ۙ﴿۳۸﴾

(33-38) There could be no hindrance to the Prophet regarding what Allah ordained for him. (74) Such has been Allah's

Way (with the Prophets) who went before. Allah's command is a decree firmly determined. (75)

(74) These words show that for the other Muslims such a marriage is just permissible but for the Prophet (peace be upon him) it was a duty which Allah had imposed on him.

(75) That is, for the Prophets it has always been a law that whatever command they receive from Allah, they have to act on it as a duty which they cannot in any case avoid. When Allah enjoins something on His Prophet (peace be upon him), he has to accomplish it even if the entire world is deadly opposed to it.

الَّذِيۡنَ يُبَلِّغُوۡنَ رِسٰلٰتِ اللّٰهِ وَيَخۡشَوۡنَهٗ وَلَا يَخۡشَوۡنَ اَحَدًا اِلَّا اللّٰهَ ؕ وَكَفٰى بِاللّٰهِ حَسِيۡبًا ﴿۳۹﴾

(33-39) (This is Allah's Way) regarding those who deliver the Messages of Allah and who fear Him, and fear no one else than Allah. Allah is Sufficient as a Reckoner. (76)

(76) The words in the text have two meanings:

(1) That Allah is enough to counter every fear and danger; and,

(2) that Allah is enough to take account: none else but Allah should be feared for accountability.

مَا كَانَ مُحَمَّدٌ اَبَاۤ اَحَدٍ مِّنۡ رِّجَالِكُمۡ وَلٰكِنۡ رَّسُوۡلَ اللّٰهِ وَخَاتَمَ النَّبِيّٖنَ ؕ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ بِكُلِّ شَىۡءٍ عَلِيۡمًا ﴿۴۰﴾

(33-40) Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the seal of the Prophets. Allah has full knowledge of everything. (77)

(77) This one sentence was at the root of all those objections which the opponents were raising in connection with this marriage of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

Their first objection was that he had married his own daughter-in-law, whereas according to his own law the son's wife is forbidden for the father. This was answered by saying: "Muhammad is not the father of any of your men." That is, Zaid was not his real son, and so it was not unlawful to marry his divorced wife.

Their second objection was that even if his adopted son was not his real son, it was not necessary that he should have married his divorced wife. This was answered by saying: "But he is the Messenger of Allah." That is, it was his duty as the Messenger of Allah to put an end to all kinds of prejudices about a lawful thing which custom and tradition had made unlawful without good reason and declare it to be lawful once again.

The point was stressed by saying: "and (he is) the seal of the Prophets." That is, not to speak of a Messenger, no other Prophet would be raised after him, who could make up for a possible deficiency in the enforcement of a reform in the law and society that might have been left un-enforced in his time. Therefore, it had become all the more necessary that he should himself root out the custom of ignorance.

Again, to further emphasize this point, it was said: "Allah has knowledge of everything." that is, Allah knows best why it was imperative to get the custom of ignorance rooted out at that juncture through the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) rather than let it remain as it was. He knows that no other prophet would be coming after him in the future; therefore, if He did not abolish this custom through His last Prophet, no other person after him would be able to abolish it for all the Muslims of the world for ever. Even if the later reformers would abolish it, no action of any one of them will have the permanent and universal authority behind it so that the people of every country and every age might start following it, and none of them would have a personality endowed with that holiness and sanctity that an action's being merely his way (Sunnah) might root out every feeling of aversion and abhorrence from the mind of the people.

It is a pity that a section of the people in our age have given wrong interpretations of this verse and opened the way to a great mischief. We have therefore added a comprehensive appendix at the end of the commentary of this Surah for the explanation of the question of the finality of Prophethood and the eradication of the misunderstanding spread by the people.

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اذْكُرُوا اللّٰهَ ذِكْرًا كَثِيْرًا ﴿۴۱﴾

(33-41) Believers, remember Allah much

وَّ سَبِّحُوْهُ بُكْرَةً وَّ اَصِيْلًا ﴿۴۲﴾

(33-42) and glorify Him morning and evening. (78)

(78) This is meant to instruct the Muslims to the effect: When the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah is being showered with taunts and abuses by the enemies and his person being made the target of a propaganda campaign to frustrate his mission, the believers should neither listen to these absurd things unconcerned, nor should become themselves also involved in the doubts and suspicions spread by the enemies, nor should resort to abusive language in retaliation, but they should turn to Allah and remember Him more than usual as a special measure. The meaning of remembering Allah much has been explained in (E.N. 63) above. “Glorify Him morning and evening” means to glorify Allah constantly, to express His holiness and purity by word of mouth and not merely by counting beads on the rosary.

هُوَ الَّذِيْ يُصَلِّيْ عَلَيْكُمْ وَ مَلٰٓئِكَتُهٗ لِيُخْرِجَكُمْ مِّنَ الظُّلُمٰتِ اِلَى النُّوْرِ ؕ وَ كَانَ بِالْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ رَحِيْمًا ﴿۴۳﴾

(33-43) It is He Who lavishes His blessings on you and His angels invoke blessings on you that He may lead you out of darkness into light. He is Most Compassionate to the believers. (79)

(79) This is meant to make the Muslims realize this: The jealousy and malice of the disbelievers and hypocrites towards you is only due to the mercy that Allah has shown you through His

Messenger (peace be upon him). It is through him that you have been blessed with the faith, that you have come out from the darkness of unbelief and ignorance into the light of Islam, that you have developed the high moral and social qualities by virtue of which you stand distinguished above others. It is this which has filled the jealous people with malice and rage against the Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah. However, in this state you should not adopt any unbecoming attitude which might alienate you from the mercy of Allah.

The word Salat when used with the preposition ala by Allah in respect of the servants, it means mercy and kindness and compassion and when used by the angels in respect of the human beings, it means the prayer for mercy. That is, the angels pray to Allah to bless the human beings with His bounty and favors. Another meaning of yusalli alaikum is: Allah blesses you with renown among the people and exalts you to a high rank so that the people begin to praise you and the angels begin to eulogize you.

تَحِيَّتُهُمۡ يَوۡمَ يَلۡقَوۡنَهٗ سَلٰمٌ ۚ وَاَعَدَّ لَهُمۡ اَجۡرًا كَرِيۡمًا ۖ﴿۴۴﴾

(33-44) On the Day they meet Him they will be greeted with: “Peace.”[80] He has prepared for them a generous reward.

(80) This can have three meanings:

(1) That Allah will Himself receive them with: Peace be upon you, as has been stated in (Surah Ya Sin: Ayat 58): “they have been greeted with “peace” from the Merciful Lord.”

(2) That the angels will greet them, as stated in (Surah An- Nahl: Ayat 32): “This is the reward for those pious people whose souls are received in a pure state by the angels, who welcome them, saying: ‘Peace be upon you, enter into Paradise as the reward of your good deeds.”

(3) That they will greet one another among themselves, as stated in (Surah Yunus: Ayat 10), thus: “Therein their prayer will be Glory to Thee, O Lord, and their greeting: Peace be to you, and the burden of their hymn: Praise is for Allah alone, Lord of the universe.”

يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ اِنَّاۤ اَرۡسَلۡنٰكَ شَاهِدًا وَّ مُبَشِّرًا وَّ نَذِيۡرًا ۙ﴿۴۵﴾

(33-45) O Prophet, [81] We have sent you forth as a witness, [82] a bearer of good tidings, and a warner, [83]

[81] After admonishing the Muslims, Allah now addresses a few words of consolation to His Prophet (peace be upon him), as if to say: “We have blessed you with such and such a high rank and raised you to an exalted place of honor. Your opponents will not be able to harm you in any way by their propaganda campaign of slander and calumny. Therefore, you should not take their mischief to heart, nor give any weight to their propaganda. You should continue doing the duties of your mission, and let them utter whatever nonsense they like.” Along with this, incidentally, the other people, both the believers and the unbelievers, also have been told that the person they have to deal with is not an ordinary man but a great personality, whom Allah has raised to the highest ranks of honor and glory.

[82] The meaning of the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) being a “witness” is very vast. It includes three kinds of evidence:

(1) Verbal evidence, i.e. the Prophet (peace be upon him) should bear out the truth of the realities and principles on which Allah’s religion is based and tell the world plainly that they are the truth and all that is opposed to them is falsehood. He should rise to proclaim without hesitation and fear the Being of Allah and His Unity, the existence of the angels, the coming down of revelation, the occurrence of life-after-death, the Hell and Heaven, all are realities, even if they appear strange to the world, and the people mock the one presenting them, or call him a madman. Likewise, the Prophet (peace be upon him) should openly present before the people the concepts, values, principles and rules pertaining to morality and civilization and social life that God has revealed to him, and reject as wrong all the concepts and ways which are prevalent and are opposed to them, even if the whole world rejects them as wrong and violates them in practice. Similarly, the Prophet (peace be upon him) should proclaim as

lawful what is lawful in Allah's law even if the whole world regards it as unlawful, and should proclaim as unlawful whatever is unlawful in Allah's law even if the world regards it as lawful and pure.

(2) Practical evidence: That is, the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his own life should practically demonstrate all that he has been commissioned to present before the world. His life should be free from every shade of that which he calls evil, and his own character should clearly reflect that which he calls good; he should be the foremost in carrying out what he regards as obligatory, and most cautious in refraining from what he calls sinful. He should exert his utmost to enforce the code of life which he calls divine. His own character and conduct should bear out how sincere and truthful he is in his invitation; and his own self should be such a model of his teaching that anyone who sees him should know what kind of a man he wants to produce by the faith to which he invites the world, what kind of a character he wants to instill in him and what system of life he wants to be established through him in the world.

(3) Evidence in the Hereafter. That is, when the court of Allah is established in the Hereafter, the Prophet (peace be upon him) should give evidence to prove that he had conveyed to the people the entire message, without making any alteration or changes in it, that had been entrusted to him, and that he had shown no slackness in making the truth manifest before them, by word and by deed. On the basis of this evidence, it will be determined what reward the believers deserve and what punishment the disbelievers deserve.

From this one can have an idea of how great a responsibility had Allah placed upon the Prophet (peace be upon him) by raising him to the position of a "witness", and how great should be the personality worthy of that high position. Evidently, there has been no slackness whatever on the part of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the matter of giving evidence with regard to the faith, verbally as well as practically. That is why in the Hereafter, he will be able to testify that he had made the truth plain to the people, and that is how Allah's argument will be established against them; otherwise, if, God forbid, there had

been any slackness on the part of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in providing evidence, he could neither be a witness against them in the Hereafter nor could any case be established against the deniers of the truth.

Some people have tried to give a different interpretation to the word witness. They say that the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the Hereafter will bear witness to the acts and deeds of the people. From this they conclude that the Prophet (peace be upon him) is watching and witnessing the acts of all the people; otherwise he could not bear the witness. But according to the Quran this interpretation is absolutely wrong. The Quran tells us that Allah has arranged a different system for recording the acts of the people. For this purpose His angels are preparing the conduct book of every person. See (Surah Qaf: Ayats 17-18), and (Surah Al-Kahf: Ayat 49). After this He will make the people's own limbs also to bear witness against them, (Surah Ya Sin: Ayat 65), (Surah Ha Meem As-Sajdah: Ayats 20-21). As for the Prophets, they are not to testify to the acts of the people, but to give evidence to prove that they had conveyed the truth to the people. The Quran clearly says:

On the Day when Allah will assemble all the Messengers, He will ask: What was the response you received? They will answer: We have no knowledge. You alone have the full knowledge of all that is hidden. (Surah Al-Maidah: Ayat 109).

In the same connection, the Quran says about the Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) that when he will be questioned about the deviation of the Christians, he will say: "I was a witness to their conduct as long as I remained among them, but after You recalled me. You watched over them." (Surah Al-Maidah: Ayat 117)

These verses clearly show that the Prophets will not be witnesses in regard to the acts of the people. As to what they will bear witness to the Quran gives an equally clear answer:

O Muslims, We have made you a community of the Golden Mean so that you may be witnesses in regard to mankind and the

Messenger may be a witness in regard to you. (Surah Al-Baqarah: Ayat 143).

(O Muhammad, warn them of) the Day when We shall call a witness from among every community to testify against it. And We shall call you to testify against these people. (Surah An-Nahl: Ayat 89).

This shows that on the Day of Resurrection the Prophet's (peace be upon him) evidence in its nature will not be any different from the evidence for bearing which the Prophet's (peace be upon him) community and the witnesses in regard to every other community will be summoned. Evidently, if it be an evidence in regard to the acts, then the omnipresence of all of them also becomes necessary. And if these witnesses will be called to give evidence to confirm that the Creator's message had reached His creation, inevitably the Prophet (peace be upon him) also will be called upon to give a similar evidence.

The same is supported by the Hadith which Bukhari. Muslim, Tirmidhi. Ibn Majah, lmam Ahmad and others have related on the authority of Abdullah bin Masud, Abdullah bin Abbas, Abu ad-Darda, Anas bin Malik and many other companions (may Allah be pleased with them all), whose common theme is this: The Prophet (peace be upon him) on the Day of Resurrection will see some of his companions being brought, but instead of coming to him they will either be going or being pushed to the other side. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) will say: "O Allah, they are my companions!" Allah will say: "You do not know what misdeeds they committed after you." This theme has been reported by numerous companions and with so many chains of authorities that there remains no doubt about its authenticity. This proves that the Prophet (peace be upon him) is not at all a witness to each individual of his community and to each of his acts. As for the hadith which says that the acts of the people of his Ummah are presented before him, it does not in any way contradict this, because its purport is that Allah keeps him informed of the affairs of his Ummah, which does not mean that

the Prophet (peace be upon him) is actually witnessing the acts of every person.

(83) One should note that a person's giving the good news of a good end for belief and righteous acts and the warning of an evil end for disbelief and evil acts, in his personal capacity, is a different thing, and another's being appointed by Allah as a bearer of the good news and a warner is quite another thing. The one who is appointed to this office by Allah necessarily possesses an authority to give the good news and administer the warnings due to which his good news and his warnings are invested with legality. His giving a good news for an act has the meaning that the Greatest of all Judges, Who has sent him, approves of the act and holds it worthy of a reward. So, it is certainly imperative or obligatory or commendable in nature, and its doer will surely get a reward. On the other hand, his giving a warning of an evil end for an act has the meaning that the Sovereign forbids that act. So, it is certainly sinful and unlawful, and its doer will surely be punished. The good news and warnings of the one who is not divinely appointed cannot ever be invested with such an authority.

وَّ دَاعِيًا اِلَى اللّٰهِ بِاِذْنِهٖ وَ سِرَاجًا مُّنِيْرًا ۝۴۶

(33-46) as one who calls people to Allah by His leave, (84) and as a bright, shining lamp.

(84) Here also the same difference as pointed out above exists between the preaching of a common man and of a Prophet. As for the invitation to Allah, it is given, and can be given, by every preacher, but he is not appointed by Allah to do so. Contrary to this, a Prophet rises to call the people towards Allah by the leave of Allah. His call is not mere preaching but has also the support of the authority of the Lord of the universe, Who sent him. That is why resistance and opposition to the inviter to Allah amounts to rebellion against Allah Himself precisely as resistance to a government official when he is performing official duty is regarded as hostile to the government itself.

وَ بَشِّرِ ا لْ مُ ؤْ مِ نِيْنَ بِاَنَّ لَ هُ مْ مِّنَ اللّٰ هِ فَ ضْ لًا كَ بِ يْرًا ﴿۴۷﴾

(33-47) Announce to the believers the good tidings that Allah has kept bounteous blessings in store for them.

وَ لَا تُطِعِ الْ كٰفِ رِ يْنَ وَ الْ مُنٰفِ قِ يْنَ وَ دَعْ اَذٰ هُ مْ وَ تَوَكَّ لْ عَلَى اللّٰ هِ وَ كَفٰى بِاللّٰ هِ وَكِ يْلًا ﴿۴۸﴾

(33-48) Do not yield to the unbelievers and the hypocrites, and disregard the hurt that comes from them, and put your trust in Allah. Allah suffices as the Guardian to entrust one's affairs to.

يٰۤاَيُّ هَا الَّذِ يْنَ اٰمَنُ وْۤا اِذَا نَكَ حْ تُ مُ الْ مُ ؤْ مِ نٰتِ ثُمَّ طَلَّ قْ تُ مُ وْ هُ نَّ مِ نْ قَ بْ لِ اَنْ تَمَسُّ وْ هُ نَّ فَمَا لَكُ مْ عَلَ يْ هِ نَّ مِ نْ عِ دَّ ةٍ تَعْ تَ دُّ وْ نَ هَا فَمَتِّ عُ وْ هُ نَّ وَ سَرِّ حُ وْ هُ نَّ سَرَاحًا جَمِ يْلًا ﴿۴۹﴾

(33-49) Believers, when you marry believing women and then divorce them before you have touched them, (85) you may not require them to observe a waiting period that you might reckon against them. So make provision for them and release them in an honorable manner. (86)

(85) This sentence is explicit that the word nikah here has been used for the contract of marriage only. The lexicographers have greatly disputed over the real meaning of the Arabic word nikah. One group of them says that as a word it is common both for intercourse and for the contract of marriage. The second group says that in its meaning it is common for both. The third group opines that its real meaning is the contract of marriage and for intercourse it is used only figuratively. And the fourth group expresses the opinion that its real meaning is intercourse and for the contract of marriage it is used only figuratively. Each group has cited Arabic poetry in support of its view. But Raghib Isfahani has emphatically asserted this: “The real meaning of the word nikah is contract of marriage; it has been used for intercourse metaphorically. It is impossible that its real meaning be intercourse and may have been used for the contract of marriage only metaphorically.” The argument he gives is that all the words that have been actually coined for intercourse in Arabic, or in other languages of the world, are obscene and vulgar. No

gentleman would like to utter them in a civilized gathering. Therefore, it is not possible that a society should use the word which has actually been coined for this act for marriage as a metaphor. For conveying this meaning only chaste words have been used in every language of the world and not obscene words.

As far as the Quran and Sunnah arc concerned, nikah is a term, which either implies only contract of marriage, or intercourse after the contract of marriage; but it has nowhere been used for intercourse outside marriage. This kind of intercourse has been called zina (adultery) by the Quran and Sunnah and not nikah.

(86) This is a unique verse which was sent down probably in the same period respecting some case of divorce, and so inserted in this context. This shows that it was sent down after the preceding and before the following discourse. Below is given a summary of the legal injunctions that have been derived from this verse:

(1) Although the word “believing women” has been used, which apparently may give the impression that the law enunciated in this verse is not applicable to the women of the people of the Book, yet all scholars are agreed that this very injunction is applicable to them also. That is, in case a Muslim has married such a woman, all the injunctions relating to her divorce, dower, waiting-period (iddat) and provision at divorce are the same as of marriage with a believing woman. The scholars have also agreed that Allah’s mentioning of the believing women here in particular is actually meant to tell the Muslims that only the believing women are suitable for them. That is, although it is permissible for them to marry Jewish and Christian women, it is not proper and commendable. In other words, the Quran seems to impress that Allah expects that the believers would marry only the believing women.

(2) The word mas (to touch) here has been used for intercourse by implication. Thus, the verse apparently implies that if the husband has not had intercourse with the woman, even though he has had seclusion with her and has even touched her with the hand, she will not have to observe the waiting-term (iddat) in case of divorce. But the jurists, for the sake of

precaution, have decreed that if they have had seclusion proper (i.e. seclusion during which intercourse could be possible), waiting-period will have to be observed if divorce is pronounced after it, and the waiting-period would be annulled only in case divorce was pronounced before they have had the seclusion.

(3) The annulment of the waiting-period in case of divorce before the event of seclusion means that in this case the man forfeits his right to take the woman back as his wife, and the woman becomes entitled to marry anyone she likes immediately after the divorce. But it should be borne in mind that this applies only to the divorce which is pronounced before the event of the seclusion. If a woman's husband dies before having the seclusion, the waiting period that has to be observed after death will not be annulled, but she will have to pass the same waiting-period of four months and ten days as is obligatory for a married woman in normal conditions. (Iddat is the waiting-period before the expiry of which a divorced woman or a widow is forbidden to remarry).

(4) The words "then there is no waiting term upon them," show that the waiting-period is a right of the man on the woman. But it does not mean that this is only the man's right. It, in fact, includes two other rights as well: the right of the children, and the right of Allah or of the law. The man's right is on the basis that he has the right to take the woman back as his wife during the period, and also on the basis that the proof of the parentage of his children, which depends on the woman's being pregnant or otherwise, becomes established in the waiting-period. The reason for including the right of the children is that the proof of a child's parentage is necessary for the establishment of his legal rights, and his moral status also depends on this that his parentage should not be doubtful. The reason for including the right of Allah (or the right of the law) is that even if the people and their children become heedless of their rights, the divine law requires that their rights should be protected. That is why even if a man gives a warrant to a woman that after his death or after obtaining divorce from him, there will be no waiting-period binding on her from him, the divine law will in no case annul it.

(5) "So provide for them and send them off, a graceful sending." The intention of this injunction would be fulfilled by acting in either of the two ways: If the dower had been fixed at

the time of marriage, and then divorce pronounced before the event of seclusion proper, payment of half of the dower will be obligatory, as enjoined in (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 237). To give more than what is obligatory is not binding but certainly commendable. For instance, it is commendable that besides paying half of the dower the man should let the woman retain the bridal garments, or any other articles that he had sent her for the occasion of marriage. But if no dower had been fixed at the time of marriage, it is obligatory to pay her something before sending her away, and this something should be according to the status and financial means of the man, as has been enjoined in (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 236). One group of the scholars holds that something in any case has to be paid in case of divorce as an obligation whether dower has been fixed or not.

(6) "A graceful sending" does not only mean that the woman should be provided with something on divorce but this also that separation should be adopted in a gentlemanly way, without any kind of vilification. If a man does not happen to like a woman, or there has been some other cause of complaint due to which he does not want to keep the woman, he should divorce her like a gentleman and send her away. He should not start mentioning her faults and relating his complaints against her before the people so as to also prejudice them against her. This instruction of the Quran clearly shows that annexing the enforcement of divorce to the permission of a local council or court is fully against the wisdom and spirit of the divine law, for in that case there remains no chance of "sending her away gracefully", but defamation, revilement and vilification do inevitably result even if the man does not so will. Moreover, the words of the verse also do not admit that the power of the man to divorce should be bound up with the permission of a local council or court. The verse is clearly giving the married man the power of divorce and placing on him alone the responsibility that if he wants to release the woman before touching her he must pay her half the dower as an obligation, or something else according to his means. From this the object of the verse clearly seems to be that in order to prevent divorce from being taken lightly the man should be placed under the burden of a financial responsibility so that he himself uses his power of divorce with sense, and there is

no chance of an external interference in the internal affairs of the two families.

(7) Ibn Abbas, Said bin al-Musayyib, Hasan Basri, Ali bin al-Husain (Zain al-Abidin), Imam Shafei and Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal have deduced from the words, “when you marry, and then divorce” that divorce takes effect only when marriage has been contracted. Divorce before the contract of marriage is without effect. Therefore if a person says, “If I marry such and such a woman, or a woman of such and such a tribe or nation, or any other woman, she is divorced,” it will be an absurd and meaningless thing; no divorce can take effect from this. The following Ahadith are presented in support of this view:

“The son of Adam is not entitled to use his power of divorce in respect of that which he does not possess.” (Ahmad, Abu Daud, Tirmidhi, Ibn Majah). And: “There is no divorce before marriage.” (Ibn Majah). But a great number of the jurists hold that this verse and these Ahadith apply in the case when a man says to a woman, who is not his wife, “You have divorce on you,” or “I divorce you.” Saying such a thing is no doubt absurd, and is of no legal consequence, but if he says, “If I marry you, you are divorced,” this is not divorcing before the marriage, but the person is in fact declaring his intent that when the woman is married to him, she will stand divorced. Such a declaration cannot be absurd and without effect, but, as a matter of fact, whenever the woman is married to him, divorce will fall on her. The jurists who hold the view have further differed as to what extent this kind of divorce will have effect.

Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Muhammad and Imam Zufar hold that divorce will take place in any case whether a person specifics a woman or a tribe or a nation, or talks generally so as to say. “Any woman whom I marry is divorced.” Abu Bakr al-Jassas has cited the same opinion also from Umar, Abdullah bin Masud, Ibrahim Nakhai, Mujahid and Umar bin Abdul Aziz (may Allah show mercy to them all).

Sufyan Thauri and Uthman al-Batti say that divorce will take place only in case the person says, “If I marry such and such a woman, she is divorced.”

Hasan bin Salih, Laith bin Saad and Amir ash-Shabi, say that such a divorce will take place even if something is said in general

terms provided that a particular class of the people has been mentioned; for instance, if the person has said. “If I marry a woman of such and such a family, or such and such a tribe, or such and such city or country or nation, she is divorced.”

Ibn Abi Laila and Imam Malik, disputing the above opinion, have added a condition that the time limit also should be determined. For example, if the man said: “If I marry within this year or the next ten years such and such a woman or a woman from such and such a class, she is divorced,” divorce will take place, otherwise not. Imam Malik also adds that if the time limit is so long that the man is not expected to outlive it, his declaration will have no effect.

يٰۤاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ اِنَّاۤ اَحۡلَلۡنَا لَكَ اَزۡوَاجَكَ الّٰتِيۡۤ اٰتَيۡتَ اُجُوۡرَهُنَّ وَ مَا مَلَكَتۡ يَمِيۡنُكَ مِمَّاۤ اَفَآءَ اللّٰهُ
عَلَيۡكَ وَ بَنٰتِ عَمِّكَ وَ بَنٰتِ عَمّٰتِكَ وَ بَنٰتِ خَالِكَ وَ بَنٰتِ خٰلٰتِكَ الّٰتِيۡ هَاجَرۡنَ مَعَكَ ۫ وَ امۡرَاَةً
مُّؤۡمِنَةً اِنۡ وَّهَبَتۡ نَفۡسَهَا لِلنَّبِيِّ اِنۡ اَرَادَ النَّبِيُّ اَنۡ يَّسۡتَنۡكِحَهَا ۗ خَالِصَةً لَّكَ مِنۡ دُوۡنِ
الۡمُؤۡمِنِيۡنَ ؕ قَدۡ عَلِمۡنَا مَا فَرَضۡنَا عَلَيۡهِمۡ فِيۡۤ اَزۡوَاجِهِمۡ وَ مَا مَلَكَتۡ اَيۡمَانُهُمۡ لِكَيۡلَا يَكُوۡنَ
عَلَيۡكَ حَرَجٌ ؕ وَ كَانَ اللّٰهُ غَفُوۡرًا رَّحِيۡمًا ۝۵۰

(33-50) O Prophet, We have made lawful for you your wives whose bridal dues you have paid, [87] and the slave-girls you possess from among the prisoners of war, and the daughters of your paternal uncles and paternal aunts, and the daughters of your maternal uncles and maternal aunts who have migrated with you, and a believing woman who gives herself to the Prophet and whom he wants to take in marriage. [88] (O Prophet), this privilege is yours alone to the exclusion of other believers. [89] We know well what restrictions We have imposed upon them as regards their wives and those whom their right hands possess, (and have exempted you from those restrictions) that there may be no constraint upon you. [90] Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful.

(87) This, in fact, is an answer to the objection of the people who said that Muhammad (peace be upon him) forbade others to keep more than four wives at a time but had himself taken a fifth wife. This objection was raised because at the time the Prophet (peace be upon him) married Zainab, he already had four wives with him:

(1) Saudah, whom he had married in the 3rd year before the Hijrah,

(2) Aishah, whom he married in the 3rd year before the Hijrah but who came to live with him in Shawwal, A.H. 1,

(3) Hafsah, whom he married in Shaban, A.H. 3, and,

(4) Umm Salamah, whom he married in Shawwal. A.H. 4. Thus, Zainab was his fifth wife. May Allah be pleased with them all. Here Allah has answered the objection of the disbelievers and the hypocrites, as if to say, O Prophet, We have made lawful for you all these five wives whom you have married by giving them their dowers. In other words, the answer means this: “It is We who have imposed the restriction of four wives on others, and it is also We ourselves who have made Our Prophet an exception to the restriction. When We could impose the restriction, We could also make the exception.”

Also, about this answer one should note that it was not meant to satisfy the disbelievers and the hypocrites but those Muslims to whom the opponents of Islam were trying to impart evil suggestions. Since they believed that the Quran is Allah’s speech and has been sent down in Allah’s own words, Allah declared through a clear and decisive verse that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had not made himself an exception from the general law about four wives of his own accord, but the exception in regard to him had been decreed by Allah.

(88) Besides making the fifth wife lawful for the Prophet, Allah in this verse also granted him the permission to marry a few other kinds of the women:

(1) The woman who came into his possession from among the slave-girls granted by Allah. According to this the Prophet (peace be upon him) selected for himself Raihanah from among the prisoners of war taken at the raid against the Bani Quraizah, Juwairiyah from among the prisoners of war taken at the raid against the Bani al- Mustaliq, Safiyyah out of the prisoners of war captured at Khaiber, and Mariah the Copt, who was presented by Maqauqis of Egypt. Out of these he set three of them free and married them, but had conjugal relations with Mariah on the ground of her being his slave-girl. In her case there

is no proof that the Prophet (peace be upon him) set her free and married her.

(2) The ladies from among his first cousins, who emigrated along with him. The words “who emigrated with you” do not mean that they accompanied the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his migration journey but this that they also had migrated in the way of Allah for the sake of Islam. The Holy Prophet was given the choice to marry any one of them he liked. Accordingly, in A.H. 7 he married Umm Habibah. (Incidentally, in this verse it has been elucidated that the daughters of one’s paternal and maternal uncles and aunts are lawful for a Muslim. In this regard the Islamic Law is different both from the Christian Law and from the Jewish Law. Among the Christians one cannot marry a woman whose line of descent joins one’s own anywhere in the last seven generations, and among the Jews it is permissible even to marry one’s real niece, i.e. daughter of one’s brother or sister.

(3) The believing woman who gives herself to the Prophet (peace be upon him), i.e. who is prepared to give herself in marriage to the Prophet (peace be upon him) without a dower, and he may like to marry her. On account of this permission the Prophet (peace be upon him) took Hadrat Maimunah as his wife in Shawwal, A.H. 7, but he did not think he should have conjugal relations with her without paying her the dower. Therefore, he paid her the dower even though she did not demand or desire it. Some commentators say that the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not have any wife who had offered herself to him; but this in fact means that he did not keep any wife without paying her the dower although she offered herself to him.

(89) If this sentence is taken to be related with the preceding sentence, it will mean that it is not permissible for any Muslim to take in marriage a woman who gives herself to him, without paying her the dower; and if it is taken to be related with the whole preceding passage, it will imply that the concession to marry more than four wives is only reserved for the Prophet (peace be upon him), not for the other Muslims. This verse also shows that certain commandments are specifically meant for the Prophet (peace be upon him) to follow and are not applicable to the other Muslims. A study of the Quran and Sunnah reveals

several such commandments. For example, the Tahajjud prayer was obligatory for the Prophet (peace be upon him) but is voluntary for the Ummah. It is unlawful for him and his family to receive charities though it is not so for others. The inheritance left by him cannot be divided; as for the inheritance left by others relevant commandments have been given in Surah An-Nisa. Keeping of more than four wives was made lawful for him though he was not enjoined to do equal treatment with them. He was permitted to marry a woman who gave herself to him without any dower, and after his death his wives were forbidden for the Ummah. None of these privileges could be enjoyed by any other Muslim. Another special thing that the commentators have mentioned in this regard is that it was forbidden for the Prophet (peace be upon him) to marry a woman from among the people of the Book though it is lawful for the Muslims to do so.

(90) This is the reason why Allah made the Prophet (peace be upon him) an exception to the general rule. “That there should be no difficulty (restraint) upon you.” does not mean that he was, God forbid, a very lustful person, and therefore, he was permitted to marry several wives so that he might not feel any hindrance due to the restriction to four wives. This meaning will be understood only by the person who, blinded by prejudice, forgets that the Prophet (peace be upon him) at the age of 25 married a lady who was 40 years old, and lived a happy, contented married life with her for full 25 years. Then, when she died, he marred another old lady Saudah, who remained his only wife for the next four years. Now, no sensible and honest person can imagine that when he became over fifty-three he was suddenly filled with lust and needed to have more and more wives. In fact, in order to understand the meaning of “no restraint”, one should, on the one hand, keep in view the great task whose responsibility Allah had placed on the Prophet (peace be upon him), and on the other hand, understand the conditions and circumstances under which he had been appointed to accomplish the great task. Anyone who understands these two things with an unbiased mind, will certainly realize why it was necessary to grant him freedom in respect of the wives and what hindrance was there for him in the restriction to four wives.

The task entrusted to the Prophet (peace be upon him) was that he should mold and chisel by all-round education and training an uncouth, uncultured nation which was not uncivilized only from the Islamic point of view but from a general viewpoint as well, into a highly civilized, refined and virtuous nation. For this purpose an unbiased mind will certainly realize why it was necessary to grant him freedom in respect of the wives and what hindrance was there for him in the restriction to four wives. For this purpose it was not enough only to train men but the training of the women was also equally necessary. However, the principles of social life and civilization which he had been appointed to teach forbade free mixing of the sexes together, and it was not possible for him to impart direct training to the womenfolk without violating this rule. Therefore, for imparting education to the women the only alternative left for him was that he should marry several women of different ages and mental capabilities and should prepare them by education and training to become his helpers, and then employ them to give religious instructions to the young, middle-aged and old women of the city and desert and teach them the new principles of morality and civilization. Moreover, the Prophet (peace be upon him) had also been appointed to abolish the system of life of the pre-Islamic days of ignorance and replace it with the Islamic system of life practically. For the accomplishment of this task a conflict was inevitable with those who upheld the system of ignorance, and this conflict was being encountered in a country where the tribal system of life was prevalent with all its peculiar customs and traditions. Under these conditions, besides other devices, it was also necessary that the Prophet (peace be upon him) should marry in different families and clans in order to cement many ties of friendship and put an end to enmities. Thus, the selection of the ladies whom he married was to some extent determined by this object besides their personal qualities. By taking Aishah and Hafsah as wives he further strengthened and deepened the relations with Abu Bakr and Umar. Umm Salamah was the daughter of the family to which Abu Jahl and Khalid bin Walid belonged, and Umm Habibah was the daughter of Abu Sufyan. These marriages neutralized the enmity of these families to a large extent; so much so that after

Umm Habibah's marriage Abu Sufyan never confronted the Prophet (peace be upon him) on the battlefield. Safiyyah, Juwairiah and Raihanah belonged to Jewish families. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) married them after setting them free, the hostile Jewish activities against him subsided. For according to the Arab traditions when the daughter of a clan or tribe was married to a person, he was regarded as the son-in-law of not only the girl's family but of the entire tribe, and it was disgraceful to fight the son-in-law.

Practical reformation of the society and abolition of its customs of ignorance was also included among the duties of his office. Therefore, he had to undertake one marriage for this purpose also, as has been related in detail in this Surah Ahzab itself.

For these reasons it was essential that there should be no restriction for the Prophet in respect of marriage so that in view of the requirements of the great mission entrusted to him he could marry as many women as he wanted.

This also brings out the error of the view of those people who think that polygamy is permissible only under special personal requirements and apart from these there can be no other object for which it may be permissible. Evidently, the reason for the Prophet (peace be upon him) to marry more wives than one was not that the wife was sick, or barren, or that he had no male child, or that there was the question of the bringing up of some orphans. Without these restrictions, he married all his wives either in view of the educational requirements, or for the reformation of society, or for political and social objectives. The question is, when Allah Himself has not kept polygamy restricted to a few particular needs, which are being mentioned these days and the Messenger of Allah took several wives for many purposes other than these, how is another person entitled to propose some restrictions in the law and then claim that he is imposing these in accordance with the Shariah? As a matter of fact, the root cause for the imposition of these restrictions is the Western concept that polygamy is an evil in itself. That very concept has given rise to

the idea that this unlawful thing can become lawful only in case of extreme circumstances. Now, however hard one may try to label this imported concept with Islam artificially, it is entirely alien to the Quran and Sunnah and the whole Muslim literature.

تُرۡجِیۡ مَنۡ تَشَآءُ مِنۡہُنَّ وَ تُـٔۡوِیۡۤ اِلَیۡکَ مَنۡ تَشَآءُ ؕ وَ مَنِ ابۡتَغَیۡتَ مِمَّنۡ عَزَلۡتَ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَیۡکَ ؕ ذٰلِکَ اَدۡنٰۤی اَنۡ تَقَرَّ اَعۡیُنُہُنَّ وَ لَا یَحۡزَنَّ وَ یَرۡضَیۡنَ بِمَاۤ اٰتَیۡتَہُنَّ کُلُّہُنَّ ؕ وَ اللّٰہُ یَعۡلَمُ مَا فِیۡ قُلُوۡبِکُمۡ ؕ وَ کَانَ اللّٰہُ عَلِیۡمًا حَلِیۡمًا ﴿۵۱﴾

(33-51) Of them you may put off any of them you wish, and you may take any of them whom you wish, and you may call back any of those whom you had (temporarily) set aside: there will be no blame on you (on this account). It is likelier that they will thus be comforted, and will not grieve, and every one of them will be well-pleased with what you give them. (91) Allah knows what is in your hearts. Allah is All-Knowing, All-Forbearing. (92)

(91) This verse was meant to relieve the Prophet (peace be upon him) of the domestic worries and anxieties so that he could carry out his duties with full peace of mind. When Allah clearly gave him the power and the authority to treat any of his wives as he liked, there remained no chance that those believing ladies would trouble him in any way, or would create complications for him by their mutual rivalries and domestic squabbles. But in spite of having this authority from Allah the Prophet (peace be upon him) meted out full justice to his wives. He did not prefer one to the other and would visit each of them regularly by turns. Only Abu Razin from among the traditionalists has said that the Prophet (peace be upon him) visited only four of his wives, Aishah, Hafsah, Zainab and Umm Salamah by turns and no turn had been fixed for the other wives. But all other traditionalists and commentators contradict this and prove by authentic traditions that even after having this authority the Prophet (peace be upon him) visited all his wives in turn and treated there alike. Bukhari, Muslim, Nasai, Abu Daud and others have reported on the authority of Aishah that even after the revelation of this verse the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) practice was that whenever he wanted to visit any of us, his wives, on the turn of another wife, he would first ask her permission for it. Abu Bakr al-Jassas relates

from Urwah bin Zubair that Aishah told him, “As to our rants the Prophet (peace be upon him) never preferred any of us to the other, although it seldom happened that he did not visit all his wives on the same day, but he never touched a wife unless it was her day by turn.” And this also is a tradition from Aishah that during his last illness when it became difficult for him to move about he asked for his other wives’ permission to stay with her, and only on their approval he passed his last days in her apartment. Ibn Abi Hatim has cited this from Imam Zuhri that the Prophet (peace be upon him) is not known to have deprived any of his wives of her turn. To this only Saudah was an exception, who on account of her advanced age had willingly surrendered her turn in favor of Aishah.

Here, nobody should entertain the doubt that Allah had, God forbid, shown an undue privilege to His Prophet (peace be upon him) and deprived his wives of their rights. As a matter of fact, the great objectives for the sake of which the Prophet (peace be upon him) had been made an exception to the general rule in respect of the number of wives, also demanded that he should be afforded full peace in domestic life and anything that could cause him distraction and embarrassment should be eradicated. It was a unique honor for the wives that they were privileged to be the life-partners of the greatest of all men like the Prophet (peace be upon him), and by virtue of this they got the opportunity to become his companions and helpers in the great task of reform and invitation that was to become the means of true success for mankind till the end of time. Just as the Prophet (peace be upon him) was offering every kind of sacrifice for the sake of this objective and the companions were also following his example according to their capabilities, so it was also the duty of his wives to display selflessness in every way. Therefore, all the wives accepted Allah’s decision with regard to themselves happily and willingly.

(92) This is a warning for the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) wives as well as for all other people. For the wives it is a warning in the sense that if after the coming down of this divine command they did not feel reconciled to it in their hearts, they would not

escape Allah's punishment. And for others the warning is that if they entertained any kind of suspicion in their hearts in regard to the Prophet's (peace be upon him) matrimonial life, or harbored any misgiving in any recess of their minds, this would not remain hidden from Allah. Along with this Allah's attribute of forbearance has also been mentioned so that they know that although even a thought of insolence in regard to the Prophet (peace be upon him) is punishable, yet if a person got rid of such a suspicion he might have the hope of His forgiveness.

لَا يَحِلُّ لَكَ النِّسَآءُ مِنۢ بَعۡدُ وَلَآ اَنۡ تَبَدَّلَ بِهِنَّ مِنۡ اَزۡوَاجٍ وَّلَوۡ اَعۡجَبَكَ حُسۡنُهُنَّ
اِلَّا مَا مَلَكَتۡ يَمِيۡنُكَ ؕ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَىۡءٍ رَّقِيۡبًا ۝۵۲

(33-52) Thereafter women will not be lawful for you, and it will not be lawful for you to take other wives in place of them, even though their beauty might please you, (93) unless they be those whom your right hand owns. (94) Allah is watchful over everything.

(93) This has two meanings:

(1) "No other woman except those made lawful to you in (verse 50)above, is any more lawful to you" and,

(2) "When your wives have become pleased and ready to stay with you through every kind of hardship and have rejected the world in preference to the Hereafter, and are satisfied that you may treat them as you please, it is no longer lawful for you that you should divorce any of them and take another wife instead."

(94) This verse explains why one is permitted to have conjugal relations with one's slave-girls besides the wedded wives, and there is no restriction on their number. The same thing has also been stated in (Surahs An-Nisa, Ayat 3), (Al-Muminun, Ayat 6), and (Al-Maarij, Ayat 30). In all these verses the slave-girls have been mentioned as a separate class from the wedded wives, and conjugal relations with them have been permitted. Moreover, (Ayat 3 of Surah An- Nisa) lays down the number of the wives as four, but neither has Allah fixed the number of the slave-girls in that verse nor made any

allusion to their number in the other relevant verses. Here, of course, the Prophet (peace be upon him) is being addressed and told: “It is no more lawful for you to take other women in marriage, or divorce any of the present wives and take another wife in her stead; slave girls, however, are lawful.” This shows that no restriction has been imposed in respect of the slave girls.

This, however, does not mean that the divine law has provided the rich an opportunity to purchase as many slave-girls as they like for their carnal indulgence. This is in fact how the self-seeking people have exploited and abused the law. The law had been made for the convenience of the people; it had not been made to be abused. One could, for instance, similarly abuse the law concerning marriage. The Shariah permits a man to marry up to four wives and also gives him the right to divorce his wife and take another one. This law had been made in view of man’s requirements and needs. Now, if a person, merely for the sake of sensual enjoyment, were to adopt the practice of keeping four wives for a time and then divorcing them to be replaced by another company of them, it would be abusing the provisions of the law, for which the person himself would be responsible and not the Shariah. Likewise the Shariah has allowed that the women who are captured in war and whose people do not exchange them for Muslim prisoners of war nor ransom them, may be kept as slave-girls, and gave the persons to whom they are assigned by the government the right to have conjugal relations with them so that they do not become a moral hazard for the society. Then, as it was not possible to determine the number of the prisoners of war, legally also it could not be determined how many slave girls a person could keep at a time. The sale of the slaves and slave-girls was also allowed for the reason that if a slave or a slave-girl could not do well with a master, he or she could be transferred to another person so that the same person’s permanent ownership did not become a cause of unending torture for both the master and the captive. The Shariah made all these laws keeping in view human conditions and requirements for the convenience of men. If these have been made a means of sexual enjoyment and luxury by the rich, it is they who are to blame for this and not the Shariah.

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡا لَا تَدۡخُلُوۡا بُيُوۡتَ النَّبِىِّ اِلَّاۤ اَنۡ يُّؤۡذَنَ لَـكُمۡ اِلٰى طَعَامٍ غَيۡرَ نٰظِرِيۡنَ اِنٰٮهُ
وَلٰـكِنۡ اِذَا دُعِيۡتُمۡ فَادۡخُلُوۡا فَاِذَا طَعِمۡتُمۡ فَانۡتَشِرُوۡا وَلَا مُسۡتَاۡنِسِيۡنَ لِحَدِيۡثٍ ؕ اِنَّ ذٰلِكُمۡ
كَانَ يُؤۡذِى النَّبِىَّ فَيَسۡتَحۡىٖ مِنۡكُمۡ وَاللّٰهُ لَا يَسۡتَحۡىٖ مِنَ الۡحَـقِّ ؕ وَاِذَا سَاَلۡتُمُوۡهُنَّ مَتَاعًا
فَسۡـَٔلُوۡهُنَّ مِنۡ وَّرَآءِ حِجَابٍ ؕ ذٰلِكُمۡ اَطۡهَرُ لِقُلُوۡبِكُمۡ وَقُلُوۡبِهِنَّ ؕ وَمَا كَانَ لَكُمۡ اَنۡ تُؤۡذُوۡا
رَسُوۡلَ اللّٰهِ وَلَاۤ اَنۡ تَنۡكِحُوۡۤا اَزۡوَاجَهٗ مِنۡۢ بَعۡدِهٖۤ اَبَدًا ؕ اِنَّ ذٰلِكُمۡ كَانَ عِنۡدَ اللّٰهِ عَظِيۡمًا ۝
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(33-53) Believers, enter not the houses of the Prophet without his permission, (95) nor wait for a meal to be prepared; instead enter when you are invited to eat, (96) and when you have had the meal, disperse. Do not linger in idle talk. (97) That is hurtful to the Prophet but he does not express it out of shyness; but Allah is not ashamed of speaking out the Truth. And if you were to ask the wives of the Prophet for something, ask from behind a curtain. That is more apt for the cleanness of your hearts and theirs. (98) It is not lawful for you to cause hurt to Allah's Messenger, (99) nor to ever marry his wives after him. (100) Surely that would be an enormous sin in Allah's sight.

(95) This is an introduction to the general command that was given in (Surah An-Nur, Ayat 27) about a year later. In the ancient times the Arabs would enter one another's house unceremoniously. If a person had to see another person he did not think it was necessary to call at the door or take permission for entry, but would enter the house and ask the womenfolk and children whether the master was at home or not, This custom of ignorance was the cause of many evils and would often give rise to some serious evils. Therefore, in the beginning a rule was made in respect of the houses of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that no person, whether a close friend or a distant relative, could enter there without permission. Then in Surah An-Nur a general command was given to enforce this rule for the houses of all the Muslims.

(96) This is the second command in this connection. An uncivilized practice prevalent among the Arabs was that the visitors would call on a friend or acquaintance right at the time of the meals, or would come and prolong their stay till the meals

time approached. This would often cause the master of the house great embarrassment. He could neither be so discourteous as to tell the visitors to leave because it was his meals time, nor could feed so many unexpected guests together. For it is not always possible for a person to arrange meals immediately for as many visitors as happened to call on him at a time. Allah disapproved of this practice and commanded that the visitors should go for meals to a house only when invited. This command did not in particular apply to the Prophet's (peace be upon him) house only but the rules were in the beginning enforced in that model household so that they become general rules of etiquette in the houses of the other Muslims as well.

(97) This was to reform yet another foolish practice. The guests at a feast, after they had finished eating, would sit down to endless gossip and discussions much to the inconvenience of the people of the house. They would often embarrass the Prophet (peace be upon him) also by this practice, but he would forbear and forget. At last on the day of the marriage feast of Zainab the embarrassment thus caused crossed all limits. According to the Prophet's (peace be upon him) special attendant, Anas bin Malik, the feast was held at night. Most of the people left after taking food but a couple or two of them got engaged in gossip. Disconcerted the Prophet (peace be upon him) rose and went round to his wives. When he returned he found the gentlemen still sitting. He turned back and sat in Aishah's apartment. When a good deal of the night had passed he came to know that the gentlemen had left. Then he returned and went to the apartment of Zainab. After this it became inevitable that Allah Himself should warn the people of these evil practices. According to Anas these verses were revealed on this occasion. (Muslim, Nasai, Ibn Jarir).

(98) This is the verse which is called "the verse of the veil". Bukhari has related on the authority of Anas that before the coming down of this verse, Umar had made a suggestion several times to the Prophet (peace be upon him) to the effect: O Messenger of Allah, all sorts of the people, good and bad, come to visit you. Would that you commanded your wives to observe hijab. According to another tradition, once Umar said to the holy

wives, “If what I say concerning you is accepted, my eyes should never see you.” But since the Prophet (peace be upon him) was not independent in making law, he awaited divine revelation. At last, this command came down that except for the mahram males as being stated in (Ayat 55) below no other man should enter the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) houses, and whoever had to ask something from the ladies, should ask for it from behind a curtain. After this command curtains were hung at the doors of the apartments of the wives, and since the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) house was a model for the Muslims to follow, they too hung curtains at their doors. The last sentence of the verse itself points out that whoever desire that the hearts of the men and women should remain pure, should adopt this way.

Now whosoever has been blessed with understanding by Allah can himself see that the Book which forbids the men and women to talk to each other face to face and commands them to speak from behind a curtain because “That is purer for your hearts and for their hearts,” could not possibly permit that the men and women should freely meet in mixed gatherings, educational and democratic institutions and offices, because it did not affect the purity of the hearts in any way. For him who does not want to follow the Quran, the best way would be that he should disregard its commands and should frankly say that he has no desire to follow it. But this would be the height of meanness that he should violate the clear commandments of the Quran and then stubbornly say that he is following the spirit of Islam which he has extracted. After all, what is that spirit of Islam which these people extract from sources outside the Quran and the sunnah?

(99) The allusion is to the false allegations that were being made in those days against the Prophet (peace be upon him), and some weak-minded Muslims also were joining the disbelievers and the hypocrites in doing this.

(100) This is the explanation of what has been said in (Verse 6): “The Prophet’s wives are mothers of the believers.”

إِن تُبْدُوا شَيْـًٔا أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُلِّ شَىْءٍ عَلِيمًا ﴿٥٤﴾

(33-54) (It does not matter) whether you disclose something or conceal it, for Allah certainly knows everything. (101)

(101) That is, “If a person entertains an evil thought in his heart against the Prophet (peace be upon him), or harbors an evil intention about his wives, it will not remain hidden from Allah, and he will be punished for it.”

لَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيۡهِنَّ فِىۡۤ اٰبَآئِهِنَّ وَ لَاۤ اَبۡنَآئِهِنَّ وَ لَاۤ اِخۡوَانِهِنَّ وَ لَاۤ اَبۡنَآءِ اِخۡوَانِهِنَّ وَ لَاۤ اَبۡنَآءِ اَخَوٰتِهِنَّ وَ لَا نِسَآئِهِنَّ وَ لَا مَا مَلَكَتۡ اَيۡمَانُهُنَّ وَ اتَّقِيۡنَ اللّٰهَ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ كَانَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَىۡءٍ شَهِيۡدًا ۝۵۵

(33-55) It will not be blameworthy for the wives of the Prophet if their fathers, their sons, their brothers, their brothers' sons, their sisters' sons, (102) and the women with whom they have social relations, (103) and the persons whom their right hands possess enter their houses. (104) (O women), shun disobeying Allah. Allah is watchful over everything. (105)

(102) For explanation, see (E.Ns 38 to 42 of Surah An-Nur). Allama Alusi’s commentary in this connection is also noteworthy. He says, “Brothers and sons of brothers and sisters include all those relatives who are unlawful for a woman, whether they are blood relations or foster relations. This list does not mention the paternal and maternal uncles because they are like the parents to the woman, or perhaps they have been left out because there was no need to mention them after mentioning their sons, For the reason for not observing hijab from the brother’s son and sister’s son is the same as of not observing it from the paternal and maternal uncles.” (Ruh al-Maani).

(103) For explanation, see (E. N. 43 of Surah An-Nur).

(104) For explanation, see (E. N. 44 of Surah An-Nur).

(105) It means this: “After the coming down of this absolute command no person outside the circle of the relatives, who have been made an exception, should be allowed to enter the houses

without hijab being observed from them," Another meaning is: "The woman should never adopt the attitude that they should observe hijab when the husband is present, but should appear without hijab before the other men, when he is away. Such a conduct may remain hidden from the husband but not from Allah."

اِنَّ اللّٰهَ وَ مَلٰٓئِكَتَهٗ يُصَلُّوْنَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ ؕ يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا صَلُّوْا عَلَيْهِ وَ سَلِّمُوْا تَسْلِيْمًا ۝۵۶

(33-56) Allah and His angels bless the Prophet. (106) Believers, invoke blessings and peace on him. (107)

(106) Allah's sending His blessings on His Prophet, means this: Allah is very kind to His Prophet (peace be upon him): He praises him, blesses his work, exalts his name, and showers His mercy on him. Blessings of the angels, means: They love the Prophet (peace be upon him) most dearly and pray to Allah to bless him with the highest ranks, cause his religion and Shariah to flourish and exalt him to the laudable position. One can clearly see from the context, why this thing has been said here. This was the time when the enemies of Islam were making all sorts of false allegations against the Prophet (peace be upon him) in order to satisfy their jealousy on the success of faith. By sullying him, they thought they would destroy his moral influence through which Islam and the Muslims were gaining more and more ground every day. Such were the conditions when Allah sent down this verse, as if warn the people: "However hard the disbelievers and the hypocrites and the polytheists might try to vilify and slander My Prophet (peace be upon him) with a view to frustrating his mission, they are bound to suffer disgrace and humiliation in the end, for I am kind to him, and the angels, who are administering the entire universe, are his supporters and admirers. His enemies cannot gain anything by their condemnation of him because I am exalting his name and My angels are adoring him constantly. They cannot harm him by their mean machinations when My mercy and blessings are with him, and My angels pray for him day and night to the effect: "O Lord of the worlds, raise Muhammad (peace be upon him) to even higher ranks and make his religion flourish and prosper."

(107) In other words, it means this: O people, who have found the right path through Muhammad (peace be upon him), the Messenger of Allah, you should recognize his true worth and be grateful to him for his great favors to you. You were lost in the darkness of ignorance, he afforded you the light of knowledge. You had become morally bankrupt, he raised you high on the moral level so that the people now feel envious of you. You had sunk to barbarism and savagery, he adorned you with the most refined human civilization. The disbelievers everywhere have turned his enemies only because he has done you these favors; otherwise personally he has not done any harm to anyone. Therefore, the inevitable demand of your gratitude to him is that you should regard him with an equal, or even greater love than the malice and grudge these people display against him; that you should show a greater attachment to him than the hatred these people show towards him; that you should praise and adore him even more fervently than they condemn him; that you should wish him well even more heartily than they wish him ill, and pray for him just as the angels do day and night, saying: “O Lord of the worlds: Just as Your Prophet has done us countless and endless favors, so do You also show him endless and limitless mercy, raise him to the highest ranks in the world and bless him with the greatest nearness to Yourself in the hereafter.”

In this verse, Muslims have been commanded two things: (1) Sallu alaihi; and (2) sallimu taslima. The word Salat when used with the associating panicle ala gives three meanings: (1) To be inclined to some body, to attend to him with love, and to bend over him; (2) to praise somebody; and (3) to pray for somebody. Obviously, when the word is used in regard to Allah, it cannot be in the third meaning, for it is absolutely inconceivable that Allah should pray to someone else; it can only be used in the first two meanings. But when this word is used for the servants, whether angels or men, it will be in all the three meanings. It will contain the sense of love as well as praise and prayer for mercy. Therefore, the meaning of giving the command of sallu alaihi to the believers for the Prophet (peace be upon him) is: “Be attached to him, praise and adore him and pray for him.”

The word salam also has two meanings: (1) To be secure from every kind of affliction and fault and defect; and (2) to be at peace and refrain from opposing the other person. Therefore, one meaning of sallimu taslima in regard to the Prophet (peace be upon him) is: “You should pray for his well-being and security,” and another meaning is: “Cooperate with him with all your heart and mind; refrain from opposing him and obey him most faithfully and sincerely.”

When this command was sent down, several of the companions said to the Prophet (peace be upon him), “O Messenger of Allah, you have taught us the method of pronouncing salam i.e. of saying as-salamu alaika ayyuhannabiyyu wa rahmatullahi wa barakat-u-hu in the Prayer, and as-salamu alaika ya Rasul-Allah as a greeting, but what is the method of sending Salat on you?” In response to this, the methods of pronouncing Salat and darud that the Prophet (peace be upon him) taught to many people on different occasions are as follows:

Kaab bin Ujrah: Allahumma salli ala Muhammad-in wa ala al-i Muhammad-in kama sallaita ala Ibrahima wa ala al-i Ibrahima irmaka Hamidum-Majid, wa barik ala Muhammad-in wa ala al-i Muhammad-in kama barakta ala Ibrahima wa ala al-i Ibrahima innaka Hamid-um-Majid. This darud with a little difference in wording has been reported by Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Daud, Tirmidhi, Nasai, Ibn Majah, Imam Ahmad, Ibn Abi Shaibah, Abdur Razzaq, Ibn Abi Hatim and Ibn Jarir on the authority of Kaab bin Ujrah.

Ibn Abbas: From him also the same darud as given above has been reported with a slight difference. (Ibn Jarir).

Abu Humaid Saidi: Allahumma salli ala Muhammad-in wa azwaji-hi wa dhurriyati-hi kama sallaita ala Ibrahima wa ala al-i Ibrhima wa barik ala Muhammad-in wa azwaji-hi wa dhurriyat-hi kama barakta ala al-i Ibrahima irmaka Hamidum- Majid. (Malik, Ahmad, Bukhari, Muslim, Nasai, Abu Daud, Ibn Majah).

Abu Masud Badri: Allahumma salli ala Muhammad-in wa ala al-i Muhammad-in kama sallaita ala Ibrahima wa ala al-i Ibrahima wa barik ala Muhammad-in wa ala al-i Muhammad-in kama barakta 'ala Ibrahima fil- alamin innaka Hamid-um-Majid (Malik, Muslim, Abu Daud, Tirmidhi, Nasai Ahmad, Ibn Jarir, Ibn Habban, Hakim).

Abu Said Khudri: Allahumma salli ala Muhammad-in abdika wa rasuli-ka kama sallaita 'ala Ibrahima wa barik 'ala Mahammad-in wa ala al-i Muhammad-in kama ba rakta ala Ibrahim. (Ahmad, Bukhari, Nasai, Ibn Majah).

Buraidah al-Khuzai: Allahumm-ajal Salataka wa rahmataka wa barakati-ka ala Muhammad-in wa ala al-i Muhammad-in kama Ja altaha ala Ibrahima innaka Hamid-um-Majid. (Ahmad, Abd bin Humaid, Ibn Marduyah).

Abu Hurairah: Allahumma salli ala Muhammad-in wa ala al-i Muhammad-in wa barik ala Muhammad-in wa ala al-i Muhammad-in kama sallaita wa barakta ala Ibrahima wa ala al-i Ibrahim fil-alamin innaka Hammid-um-Majid. (Nasai).

Talhah: Allahumma salli ala Muhammad-in wa ala al-i Muhammad-in kama sallaita ala Ibrahima innaka Hamidum- Majid wa barik ala Muhammad-in wa ala al-i Muhammad-in kama barakta ala Ibrahima innaka Hamidum- Majid. (Ibn Jarir).

All these daruds agree in meaning despite the difference in wording. A few points concerning them should be understood clearly:

First, in all these the Prophet (peace be upon him) tells the Muslims that the best way of sending darud and Salat on him is that they should pray to Allah, saying, “O God: send darud on Muhanunad.” Ignorant people who do not possess full understanding of the meaning intermediately raise the objection: “How strange that Allah commands us to send darud on His Prophet (peace be upon him), but we, in return, implore Allah that

He should send it." The fact, however, is that the Prophet (peace be upon him) has instructed the people, as if to say, "You cannot do full justice to sending of darud and Salat on me even if you want to. Therefore, pray only to Allah to bless me with Salat." Evidently, the Muslims cannot raise the ranks of the Prophet (peace be upon him), Allah only can raise them; the Muslims cannot repay the Prophet (peace be upon him) for his favors and kindness, Allah only can adequately reward him for this; the Muslims cannot attain any success in exalting the Prophet's (peace be upon him) name and promoting the cause of religion unless Allah favors them with His help and succor. So much so that the Prophet's (peace be upon him) love can be impressed in our hearts only by Allah's help; otherwise Satan can turn us away from him by every kind of evil suggestions and suspicions. May Allah protect us from this! Therefore, there is no other way of doing full justice to sending of darud and salat on the Prophet (peace be upon him) than that we should supplicate Allah to send salat on him. The person who says: Allahumma salli ala Muhammad-in, in fact, admits his helplessness before Allah, and says: "O God: it is not in my power to send salat on Your Prophet (peace be upon him) as it should be sent. I, therefore, implore You to send it on my behalf and take from me whatever service You will in this regard."

Secondly, the Prophet (peace be upon him) did not want to have this prayer reserved for only himself but included his followers and his wives and offspring also. The meaning of the wives and offspring is obvious. As for the word al it does not merely denote the people of the Prophet's household, but it applies to all those people who follow him and adopt his way. Lexically, there is a difference between the words aal and ahl. By the aal of a person are understood all those people who are his companions, helpers and followers, whether they are related to him or not, and his ahl are those who are related to him, whether or not they are his companions and followers. The Quran has used the word aal-Firaun at fourteen places but nowhere has it been used to mean the people of Pharaoh's household only; everywhere it implies all those who sided with him in the conflict against the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him). (For example, see (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 49-50), (Surah Ale-Imran, Ayat 11), (Surah Al-Araf, Ayat

130), (Surah Al-Mumin, Ayat 46). Thus, from aal- Muhammad is excluded every such person who is not on the way of Muhammad (peace be upon him), whether he be a member of his household, and in it is included every such person, who is following in his footsteps, whether he is not even distantly related to him by blood. However, those members of the Prophet's household who are related to him by blood and are also his followers are most worthy to be regarded as aal-Muhammad.

Thirdly, the same thing found in all the daruds taught by the Prophet (peace be upon him) is that he may be blessed with the same kindness with which Abraham (peace be upon him) and the followers of Abraham have been blessed. The people have found it difficult to understand this. The scholars have given different interpretations of it but none of them is appealing. In my opinion the correct interpretation is this (though the real knowledge is with Allah): Allah blessed the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) in particular with something with which He has blessed no one else in the world, and it is this: All those human beings who regard the Prophethood and the revelation and the Book as the source of guidance are agreed on the leadership of the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), whether they are Muslims or Christians or Jews. Therefore, what the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) means to say is this: "O Allah, just as You have made the Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) the refuge of the followers of all the Prophets, so You make me also the refuge, so that no one who is a believer in Prophethood, may remain deprived of the grace of believing in my Prophethood." That it is an Islamic practice to send darud on the Prophet (peace be upon him), that it is commendable to pronounce it when the Prophet's (peace be upon him) name is mentioned, that it is a Sunnah of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to recite it in the Prayer in particular, is agreed upon by all the scholars. There is also a consensus that it is obligatory to pronounce the darud on the Prophet (peace be upon him) at least once in a lifetime, because Allah has clearly commanded it, but apart from this there are differences among the scholars regarding it.

Imam Shafei holds the view that it is obligatory to recite salat on the Prophet during tashahhud in the final sitting of the Prayer, for without it the Prayer would be void. Ibn Masud, Abu-

Masud Ansari, Ibn Umar and Jabir bin Abdullah from among the companions, Shabi, Imam Muhammad bin Baqir, Muhammad bin Kab al-Qurzi and Muqatil bin Hayyan from among the immediate followers of the companions, and Ishaq bin Rahwayah from among the jurists also held the same opinion, and Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal also had adopted the same in the end.
Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Malik and the majority of the scholars hold that the pronouncing of the Salat is obligatory only once in a life time. It is just like the Kalimah: whoever affirmed the divinity of Allah and the Prophethood of the Messenger of Allah once in a lifetime carried out his duty. Likewise, the one who pronounced the darud and salat once in his lifetime would be deemed to have done his duty of pronouncing the darud on the Prophet (peace be upon him). After it, it is neither obligatory (fird) to recite the Kalimah nor the darud.

Another group holds that it is absolutely wajib to recite it in the Prayer but not necessarily in the tashahhud.

Still another group holds the view that it is wajib to pronounce the darud in every supplication. Some others say that it is wajib to pronounce it whenever the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) name is mentioned, and according to another group recitation of the darud is wajib only once in an assembly or sitting no matter how often the name of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is mentioned during it.

These differences only pertain to the darud's being obligatory in status or otherwise. As for its merit and excellence, its being conducive to high spiritual rewards and its being a great righteous act, there is complete unanimity among the Ummah. No one who is a believer in any degree can have any different opinion about it. The darud is the natural supplication of the heart of every Muslim, who realizes that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the Ummah’s greatest benefactor after Allah. The greater one’s appreciation of Islam and the faith, the greater will one be appreciative of the favors of the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself; and the greater one’s appreciation of the favors of the Prophet (peace be upon him), the more often will he pronounce the darud and salat on him. Thus, in fact, the frequency with which a person pronounces the darud is the measure which shows the depth of his relationship with the

Prophet’s (peace be upon him) religion and the extent of his appreciation of the blessing of the faith. On this very basis the Prophet (peace be upon him) has said: “The angels send darud on him who sends darud on me, as long as he does so.” (Ahmad, Ibn Majah). “He who sends darud on me once, Allah sends darud on him ten times over.” (Muslim) “The one who sends darud on me most often will deserve to remain close to me on the Day of Resurrection” (Tirmidhi). “Niggardly is the person who does not send darud on me when I am mentioned before him” (Tirmidhi).

As to whether it is permissible to use the words Allahumma salli ala so and so, or sallallahu alaihi wa sallam, or similar other words for others than the Prophet (peace be upon him), it is disputed. One group of the scholars of whom Qadi Iyad is most prominent holds it as absolutely permissible. Their argument is this: Allah Himself has used the word salat in respect of those who were not prophets at several places in the Quran, e.g. in (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 157), (Surah At-Taubah, Ayat 103), (Surah Al-Ahzab, Ayat 43). Similarly, the Prophet (peace be upon him) also prayed for those who were not prophets using the word salat) on several occasions. For example, he prayed for a companion, thus: Allahumma salli ala al Abi Aufa; on the request of Jabir bin Abdullah’s wife, he said: Sallallahu alaihi wa ala zaujiki. Then concerning those who came with the Zakat money, he would say: Allahumma salli alaihim. Praying for Saad bin Ubadah he said: Allahumma ajal salataka wa rahmataka ala al-i Saad bin Ubadah. And about the soul of the believer the Prophet (peace be upon him) gave the news that the angels prayed for him, thus: Sallallahu alaika wa ala jasadika. However, the majority of the Muslim scholars opine that it was correct for Allah and His Messenger but not so for the Ummah. They say that it has become a convention with the Muslims to use salat-o-salam exclusively for the Prophets. Therefore, it should not be used for those who are not prophets. On this very basis Umar bin Abdul Aziz once wrote to one of his governors, saying: “I hear that some preachers have started using the word salat in respect of their patrons and supporters in the manner of salat alan-Nabi. As soon as you receive this letter, stop them from this practice and command them to use salat exclusively for the Prophets and remain content with the prayer for the other Muslims." (Ruh al-

Maeni). Most scholars also hold that using the words sallallahu alaihi wa sallam for any other Prophet than the Prophet (peace be upon him) is not correct.

اِنَّ الَّذِیۡنَ یُؤۡذُوۡنَ اللّٰہَ وَ رَسُوۡلَہٗ لَعَنَہُمُ اللّٰہُ فِی الدُّنۡیَا وَ الۡاٰخِرَۃِ وَ اَعَدَّ لَہُمۡ عَذَابًا مُّہِیۡنًا ﴿۵۷﴾

(33-57) Verily those who cause annoyance to Allah and His Messenger Allah has cursed them in this world and in the Hereafter and has prepared for them a humiliating chastisement. (108)

(108) "To cause harm to Allah" implies two things: That Allah should be disobeyed, that an attitude of disbelief and shirk and atheism be adopted with regard to Him, and that things made unlawful by Him be made lawful; and (2) that His Messenger be troubled, for just as obedience to the Messenger is obedience to Allah, so is opposition and disobedience of the Messenger opposition and disobedience of Allah.

وَ الَّذِیۡنَ یُؤۡذُوۡنَ الۡمُؤۡمِنِیۡنَ وَ الۡمُؤۡمِنٰتِ بِغَیۡرِ مَا اکۡتَسَبُوۡا فَقَدِ احۡتَمَلُوۡا بُہۡتَانًا وَّ اِثۡمًا مُّبِیۡنًا ﴿۵۸﴾

(33-58) Those who cause hurt to believing men and to believing women have invited upon themselves a calumny (109) and a manifest sin.

(109) This verse determines the definition of slander. It is to ascribe a fault to a person which he does not have, or an error which he has not committed. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also has explained it. According to Abu Daud and Tirmidhi, when he was asked as to what is ghibat (backbiting), he replied: "It is to make mention of your brother in a manner derogatory to him." The questioner said, "And if the fault is there in my brother?" The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: "If the fault that you mentioned is there in him, you backbite him; if it is not there, you slandered him." Such an act is not only a moral sin, which will entail punishment in the Hereafter, but this verse also requires that also in the law of an Islamic State false allegation should be held as a culpable offense.

يٰٓاَيُّهَا النَّبِيُّ قُلْ لِّاَزْوَاجِكَ وَبَنٰتِكَ وَنِسَآءِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ يُدْنِيْنَ عَلَيْهِنَّ مِنْ جَلَابِيْبِهِنَّ ۭ ذٰلِكَ اَدْنٰٓى اَنْ يُّعْرَفْنَ فَلَا يُؤْذَيْنَ ۭ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ غَفُوْرًا رَّحِيْمًا ۝۵۹

(33-59) O Prophet, enjoin your wives and your daughters and the believing women, to draw a part of their outer coverings around them. (110) It is likelier that they will be recognized and not molested. (111) Allah is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful. (112)

(110) Jilbab is a large sheet and adna is to draw close and wrap up, but when this word is used with the associating particle ala, it gives the meaning of letting something down from above. Some modern translators, under the influence of the West, have translated this word “to wrap up” so as to avoid somehow the command about covering of the face. But if Allah had meant what these gentlemen want to construe, He would have said: yudnina ilai-hinna and not yudnina alai-hinna. Anyone who knows Arabic knows that yudnina alai-hinna cannot merely mean “wrapping up.” Moreover, the words min jalabib-i hinna also do not permit of this meaning. It is obvious that the preposition min here signifies a part of the sheet, and also that wrapping up is done by means of a whole sheet and not merely by a part of it. The verse, therefore, clearly means: “The women should wrap themselves up well in their sheets, and should draw and let down a part of the sheet in front of the face.”

This same meaning was understood by the major commentators who lived close to the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Ibn Jarir and Ibn al-Mundhir have related that Muhammad bin Sirin asked Ubaidah as- Salmani the meaning of this verse. (Ubaidah had become a Muslim in the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) but had not been able to visit him. He came to Madinah in the time of Umar and settled down there. He was recognized as equal in rank with Qadi Shuraih in jurisprudence and judicial matters). Instead of giving a verbal reply Ubaidah put on his sheet and gave a practical demonstration by covering his head and forehead and face and an eye, leaving only the other eye uncovered. Ibn Abbas also has made almost the same commentary. In his statements which have been reported by Ibn Abi Hatim and Ibn Marduyah, he says:

“Allah has commanded the women that when they move out of their houses for an outdoor duty, they should conceal their faces by drawing and letting down over themselves a part of their sheets, keeping only the eyes uncovered.” The same explanation of this verse has been given by Qatadah and Suddi.

All the great commentators who have passed after the period of the companions and their immediate followers have given the same meaning of this verse. Imam Ibn Jarir Tabari, in his commentary of this verse, says: “The respectable women should not look like the slave-girls from their dress when they move out of their houses, with uncovered faces and loose hair; they should rather draw and let down over them a part of their sheets or outer garments so that no evil person may dare molest them.” (Jamial Bayan, vol. xxii, p. 33).

Allama Abu Bakr al-Jassas says: “This verse points out that the young woman has been commanded to conceal her face from the other men; when moving out of the house she should cover herself up well to express chastity and purity of character so that people of doubtful character do not cherish any false hope when they see her.” (Ahkam al- Quran, vol. iii, p. 458).

Allama Zamakhshari says: “It means that they should let down a part of their sheet over themselves, and should cover their faces and wrap up their sides well.” (Al-Kashshaf, vol. ii, p. 221). Allama Nizamuddin Nishapuri says: “That is, they should let down a part of the sheet over them: in this verse, the women have been commanded to cover the head and face.” (Gharaib al-Quran, vol. xxii, p. 32).

Imam Razi says: “What is mean is that the people may know that they are not promiscuous women. For the woman who covers her face, though the face is not included in the satar, cannot be expected to uncover her satar, which is obligatory to cover before the other man. Thus, everyone will know that they are modest and virtuous women who cannot be expected to do anything indecent.” (Tafsir Kabir. vol. vi, p 591)

Incidentally, another thing that is proved by this verse is that the Prophet (peace be upon him) had several daughters, for Allah Himself says: “O Prophet, enjoin your wives and daughters.” These words absolutely refute the assertion of those people who without any fear of God make the claim that the Prophet had only one daughter, Fatimah, and the other daughters were not from his own loins but by the former husbands. These people are so blinded by prejudice that they do not even bother to consider what crime they are committing by denying the parentage of the children of the Prophet (peace be upon him), and what severe punishment will await for them in the Hereafter. All authentic traditions concur that from Khadijah the Prophet (peace be upon him) had not one daughter, Fatimah, but three other daughters as well. The Prophet’s earliest biographer, Muhammad bin Ishaq, after mentioning his marriage with Khadijah, says; “She was the mother of all the Prophet’s children except Ibrahim. Prophet Muhammad’s (peace be upon him) children with Khadijah were Qasim, Tahir, Tayyib, Zainab, Ruqayyah, Fatimah and Umm Kulthum and.” (Ibn Hisham, vol. 1, p. 202).

The famous genealogist, Hashim bin Muhammad bin as-Saib al-Kalbi, states: “The first born child to the, Messenger (peace be upon him) of Allah before his call to Prophethood was Qasim, then Zainab was born to him, then Ruqayyah, then Umm Kulthum." (Tabaqat Ibn Saad, vol. 1, p. 133). Ibn Hazam writes in Jawami asSirah that from Khadijah the Prophet (peace be upon him) had four daughters, the eldest being Zainab, then Ruqayyah, then Fatimah and then Umm Kulthum (pp. 38-39). Tabari, Ibn Saad, Abu Jafar Muhammad bin Habib (author of Kitab al-Muhabbar) and Ibn Abd al-Bart (author of Kitab allstiab) state on the strength of authentic sources that before her marriage with the Prophet (peace be upon him), Khadijah had two husbands, Abu Halah Tamimi by whom she had a son named Hind bin Abu Halah, and Atiq bin Aidh Makhzumi, by whom she had a daughter named Hind. Then she was married to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and all the genealogists agree that from his loins she had the four daughters as stated above. (see Tabari, vol. ii, p. 411: tabaqat Ibn Saad, vol. viii, pp. 14-16; Kitab al- Muhabbar, pp. 78, 79, 452; ., 9l-Isti'ab vol. ii, p. 718). All these

statements are authenticated by the Quranic declaration that the Holy Prophet had not one but several daughters.

(111) “May be recognized”: may be recognized to be noble and chaste women from their simple and modest dress, and not women of ill repute from whom some wicked person could cherish evil hopes. “May not be harmed”: will not be teased but let alone.

Let us pause here for a while and try to understand what spirit of the social law of Islam is being expressed by this Quranic command and what is its object which Allah Himself has stated. Before this in (Surah An-Nur, Ayat 31), the women have been forbidden to display their adornments before others except such and such men and women, and “also that they should not stamp their feet on the ground lest their hidden decoration (ornaments) should be known.” If that command is read with this verse of Al- Ahzab it becomes obvious that the intention of the command for the woman to cover herself well with the sheet here is to conceal her adornments from others. And, evidently, this purpose can be fulfilled only if the sheet or the outer-garment itself is simple; otherwise wrapping up oneself with a decorated and attractive sheet will defeat the purpose itself. Besides, Allah does not only command the woman to conceal her adornment by covering herself with the sheet, but also enjoins that she should let down a pan of the sheet over herself. No sensible person can take any other meaning of this command than that it requires to conceal the face along with the concealment of the adornments of the body and dress. Then, Allah Himself states the reason for enjoining the command, saying: “This is an appropriate way by adopting which the Muslim women will be recognized and will remain safe from trouble.” Evidently, this instruction is being given to those women who regard flirtation and stares and evil advances by men as annoying and troublesome and not as enjoyable, who do not want to be counted among ill-reputed, immodest society girls, but wish to be known as chaste and modest domestic women. To such noble and pious women Allah says: If you really wish to be known as good women, and the men’s lustful attention is not pleasurable but embarrassing for you, then you should not come out of your houses in full makeup

like the newlywed brides so as to display your beauty and physical charms before the greedy eyes of the people, but the best way for this would be that you should come out in a simple sheet fully concealing your adornments and covering your face and walking in a manner that even the jingle of your ornaments does not attract attention. The woman who applies herself to makeup and does not step out of the house until she has fully embellished and decorated herself with every adornment cannot have any other intention that to become the center of attention of all the men, whom she herself allures. After this if she complains that the greedy looks of the people cause embarrassment to her, and she does not wish to be known as a “society woman” and a “popular lady”, but wants to live as a chaste housewife, it will be nothing but a fraud. It is not the word of the mouth of a person that determines his intention, but his real intention is manifested in his act and mode of behavior. Therefore, the act of the woman who appears before the other then attractively itself shows what motivates her behavior. That is why the mischievous people cherish the same hopes from her as can be cherished from such a woman. The Quran tells the women: “You cannot be chaste women and society women at one and the same time. If you want to live as modest, chaste women, you will have to give up the ways that are conducive to becoming society women only, and adopt the way of life that can be helpful in becoming chaste women.”

Whether a man’s personal opinion is according to the Quran or opposed to it, and whether he wants to accept the Quranic guidance as a practical guide for himself or not, in any case if he does not wish to be intellectually dishonest in interpreting the Quran, he cannot fail to understand its real intention. If he is not a hypocrite he will frankly admit that the Quran's intention is what has been stated above. After this if he violates any command, he will do so with the realization that he is violating the Quranic command, or regards the Quranic guidance as wrong.

(112) That is, Allah will forgive the errors and mistakes that were committed in the pre-Islamic days of ignorance, provided that you

reform yourselves now when you have received clear guidance, and do not violate it intentionally.

لَئِن لَّمْ يَنتَهِ الْمُنٰفِقُوْنَ وَ الَّذِيْنَ فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِم مَّرَضٌ وَّ الْمُرْجِفُوْنَ فِي الْمَدِيْنَةِ لَنُغْرِيَنَّكَ بِهِمْ ثُمَّ لَا يُجَاوِرُوْنَكَ فِيْهَآ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ۝٦٠

(33-60) If the hypocrites and those in whose hearts there is a sickness, (113) and the scandal mongers in Madinah (114) do not desist from their vile acts, We shall urge you to take action against them, and then they will hardly be able to stay in the city with you.

(113) "Having diseased hearts" points to two kinds of evils:

(1) That a person should be an ill-wisher of Islam and the Muslims although he gets himself counted among the Muslims; and

(2) That he should be cherishing evil intentions and having criminal mentality and his evil tendencies be manifesting themselves in everything he thinks and does.

(114) This implies the people who, in order to cause panic among the Muslims and to lower their morale, used to spread rumors in Al-Madinah to the effect that the Muslims had suffered such and such serious setback, that a huge army was gathering together against them at such and such a place, that Al-Madinah was under threat of a sudden attack, etc. Besides this, they had another pastime. They would concoct and spread imaginary stories about the domestic life of the Prophet's (peace be upon him) household and of other Muslims so as to produce suspicions among the common people and destroy the moral influence of the Muslims.

مَّلْعُوْنِيْنَ اَيْنَمَا ثُقِفُوْٓا اُخِذُوْا وَقُتِّلُوْا تَقْتِيْلًا ۝٦١

(33-61) They shall be cursed from all around and they shall be ruthlessly killed wherever they are seized.

سُنَّةَ اللّٰهِ فِي الَّذِيْنَ خَلَوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَ لَنْ تَجِدَ لِسُنَّةِ اللّٰهِ تَبْدِيْلًا ۝٦٢

(33-62) This has been Allah's Way with those who have gone before, and you shall find no change in Allah's Way. (115)

(115) That is, “This is a permanent law of Allah’s Shariah that in an Islamic society and state such mischief-mongers are never given an opportunity to flourish and prosper. Whenever the system of society and state is established on divine law, such people will be warned to mend their ways and if they still persisted in their evil ways they would be severely dealt with and exterminated.”

يَسۡـَٔلُكَ النَّاسُ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ ؕ قُلۡ اِنَّمَا عِلۡمُهَا عِنۡدَ اللّٰهِ ؕ وَ مَا يُدۡرِيۡكَ لَعَلَّ السَّاعَةَ تَكُوۡنُ قَرِيۡبًا ﴿۶۳﴾

(33-63) People ask you concerning the Hour (of Resurrection). (116) Say: “Allah alone has knowledge of it. What do you know? Perhaps the Hour is nigh.”

(116) The Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) was generally asked this question by the disbelievers and the hypocrites. By this they did not mean to obtain any knowledge but they did so out of fun and jest. As a matter of fact, they did not believe in the coming of the Hereafter at all; they regarded its concept as an empty threat only. They did not ask about the time of its coming so that they could set their affairs right, but what they really meant was: “O Muhammad (peace be upon him), we have been doing everything to frustrate your mission, and you have not been able to do any harm to us so far; now let us know as to when will Resurrection take place when we will be taken to task by Allah.”

اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَعَنَ الۡكٰفِرِيۡنَ وَ اَعَدَّ لَهُمۡ سَعِيۡرًا ﴿۶۴﴾

(33-64) Allah has cursed the unbelievers and has prepared for them a Blazing Fire;

خٰلِدِيۡنَ فِيۡهَاۤ اَبَدًا ۚ لَا يَجِدُوۡنَ وَلِيًّا وَّ لَا نَصِيۡرًا ﴿۶۵﴾

(33-65) therein they shall abide forever. They shall find none to protect or help them.

وَمَ ثُقَلَّبُ وُجُ وُ فِى النَّارِ يَقُ لُونَ يٰلَيۡتَنَ اَطَعۡنَا اللّٰ وَ اَطَ نَا الرَّسُ لَا ٦٦

(33-66) On that Day when their faces shall be turned around in the Fire, they will say: “Would that we had obeyed Allah and obeyed the Messenger.”

وَقَالُ ا رَبَّنَ اِنَّ اَطَ نَا سَادَتَنَا وَ كُبَرَآءَنَا فَاَضَلُّ نَا السَّبِيلَا ٦٧

(33-67) They will say: “Our Lord, we obeyed our chiefs and our great ones, and they turned us away from the Right Way.

رَبَّنَ اٰتِهِم ضِعۡفَ نِ مِنَ ال عَذَابِ وَ لعَ نُ هُم لَ نًا كَبِيرًا ٦٨

(33-68) Our Lord, mete out to them a double chastisement and lay upon them a mighty curse.” (117)

(117) This thing has been stated at several places in the Quran. For instance, see (Surah Al-Araf: Ayat 187); (Surah An-Naziat: Ayats 42-46); (Surah Saba: Ayats 3-5); (Surah Al-Mulk: Ayats 24-27); (Surah Al-Mutaffifin: Ayats 10-17); (Surah Al-Hijr: Ayats 2-3); (Surah Al-Furqan: Ayats 27-29); (Surah Ha Meem As-Sajdah: Ayats 26-29).

يٰۤاَيُّ ا الَّذِ نَ اٰمَنُ ا لَا تَكُ نُ ا كَالَّذِ نَ اٰذَ ا مُسٰى فَبَرَّاَ اللّٰ مِمَّا قَالُ ا ؕ وَ كَانَ عِدَ اللّٰ وَجِيًا ٦٩

(33-69) Believers, (118) do not be like those who distressed Moses and then Allah declared him quit of the ill they spoke about him; and he had a high standing with Allah. (119)

(118) One should note that the Quran has at some places addressed the true Muslims with: “O you who have believed,” and at others places the Muslim community as a whole, which includes the believers as well as the hypocrites and the Muslims of the weak faith, and at still others places only the hypocrites. When the hypocrites and the Muslims of the weak faith are addressed with: “O you who have believed,” it is meant to put

them to shame, as if to say, “You claim to have affirmed faith, but your acts and deeds do not support your claim.” A little study of the context can easily show which class of the people has been addressed at a particular place. Here, obviously, the common Muslims are being addressed.

(119) In other words, it means: “O Muslims, do not behave like the Jews. You should not behave towards your Prophet (peace be upon him) as the children of Israel behaved towards the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him).” The Israelites themselves admit that the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was their greatest benefactor. Whatever they achieved as a nation was only due to him: otherwise in Egypt they would have been doomed to a worse fate than that of the Shudras in India. But how the Israelites treated the greatest benefactor of theirs can be judged by a cursory glance at the following places of the Bible: Exodus, 5: 20-21, 14: 12, 16: 2-3, 17: 3-4. Numbers, 11:1-15, 14:1-10, 16 (the whole chapter), 20: 1-5.

The Quran by referring to this ingratitude of the children of Israel, warns the Muslims, so as to say: “Refrain from adopting this same attitude towards Muhammad (peace be upon him); otherwise you should be ready to face the same fate as the Jews.”

This same thing was said by Prophet (peace be upon him) himself on several occasions. Once he was dividing some goods among the Muslims. When the people dispersed, a man said; “Muhammad in this division has shown no regard for Allah and the Hereafter.” Abdullah bin Masud heard this remark and told the Prophet (peace be upon him) what had been said concerning him that day. He replied, “May Allah show mercy to Moses (peace be upon him): he was maligned even more severely, but he showed patience.” (Musnad Ahmad, Tirmidhi, Abu Daud).

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَقُوۡلُوۡا قَوۡلًا سَدِيۡدًا ۙ﴿۷۰﴾

(33-70) Believers, fear Allah and speak the truth:

يُّصۡلِحۡ لَكُمۡ اَعۡمَالَكُمۡ وَيَغۡفِرۡ لَكُمۡ ذُنُوۡبَكُمۡ ؕ وَمَنۡ يُّطِعِ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوۡلَهٗ فَقَدۡ فَازَ فَوۡزًا عَظِيۡمًا ﴿۷۱﴾

(33-71) Allah will set your deeds right for you and will forgive you your sins. Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger has achieved a great triumph.

اِنَّا عَرَضۡنَا الۡاَمَانَۃَ عَلَی السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الۡاَرۡضِ وَ الۡجِبَالِ فَاَبَیۡنَ اَنۡ یَّحۡمِلۡنَہَا وَ اَشۡفَقۡنَ مِنۡہَا وَ حَمَلَہَا الۡاِنۡسَانُ ؕ اِنَّہٗ کَانَ ظَلُوۡمًا جَہُوۡلًا ﴿۷۲﴾

(33-72) We offered the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to carry it and were afraid of doing so; but man carried it. Surely he is wrong-doing, ignorant. (120)

(120) In the end, Allah wants man to realize his real position in the world; if in that position he regarded the life of the world as mere fun and sport and adopted a wrong attitude carelessly, he would only be working for his own doom.

Here, the word “amanat” (trust) implies khilafat (caliphate) which, according to the Quran, man has been granted in the earth. The inevitable result of the freedom given to man to choose between obedience and disobedience, and the powers and authority granted him over countless creations for using that freedom, is that he himself be held responsible for his voluntary acts and should deserve rewards for his righteous conduct and suffer punishment for his evil conduct. Since man has not attained these powers by his own efforts but has been granted these by Allah, and he is answerable before Allah for their right or wrong use, these have been described by the word khilafat at other places in the Quran, and by amanat here.

In order to give an idea of how important and heavy this “trust” (amanat) is, Allah says that the heavens and the earth, in spite of their glory and greatness, and the mountains, in spite of their size and firmness, could not have the power and courage to bear it. But man, the weak and frail man, has borne this heavy burden on his tiny self.

The presentation of the trust before the earth and the heavens and their refusal to bear it and their being afraid of it

may be true literally, or it may have been said so metaphorically. We can neither know nor can comprehend Allah's relationship with His creations. The earth and the sun and the moon and the mountains are dumb, deaf and lifeless for us but they may not be so for Allah. Allah can speak to each of His creations and it can respond to Him, though its nature is incomprehensible for us. Therefore, it is just possible that Allah, in fact, might have presented this heavy trust before them, and they might have shuddered to see it, and they might have made this submission before their Master and Creator.

"Lord, we find our good and our convenience only in remaining as Your powerless servants: we do not find courage to ask for the freedom to disobey and do justice to it, and then suffer Your punishment in case we cannot do justice to it." Likewise, it is also quite possible that before this present life Allah might have given another kind of existence to mankind and summoned it before Himself, and it might have willingly undertaken to accept the delegated powers and authority. We have no rational argument to regard this as impossible. Only such a person, who might have made a wrong estimate of his mental and intellectual powers and capabilities, can think of regarding it as impossible.

However, this is also equally possible that Allah may have said so allegorically. In order to give an idea of the extraordinary importance of the matter, He may have depicted the scene as if the earth and the heavens and the mountains like the Himalayas were present before Him on one side and a 5 to 6 foot man, on the other. Then Allah might have asked:

"I want to invest someone of My creation with the power that being a subject of My Kingdom, it may acknowledge My Supremacy and obey My commands of its own free will; otherwise it will also have the power to deny Me, even rebel against Me. After giving him this freedom I shall so conceal Myself from him as if I did not exist at all. And to exercise this freedom I shall invest him with vast powers, great capabilities, and shall give him dominion over countless of My creations so that he may raise any storm that he may in the universe. Then I shall call him to account

at an appointed time. The one who will have misused the freedom granted by Me, will be made to suffer a most terrible punishment; and the one who will have adopted My obedience in spite of all chances and opportunities for disobedience, will be raised to such high ranks as no creation of Mine has ever been able to attain. Now tell, which of you is ready to undergo this test?"

Hearing this discourse a hush might have prevailed for a while all through the universe. Then one huge creation after the other might have bowed down and submitted that it should be excused from the severe test. Then, at last, this frail creation might have risen and submitted: "O my Lord, I am ready to undergo this test. I shall brave all the dangers inherent in the freedom and independence only in the hope that I shall be blessed with the highest office in Your Kingdom if I pass the test."

By imagining this scene through his heart's eye only can man judge exactly what delicate position he holds in the universe. Allah in this verse has called the person unjust and ignorant, who lives a carefree life in the place of test, and has no feeling at all of how great a responsibility he is shouldering, and what consequences he will encounter of the right or wrong decisions that he makes in choosing and adopting an attitude for himself in the life of the world. He is ignorant because the fool holds himself as responsible to no one; he is unjust because he is himself preparing for his doom and is also preparing the doom of many others along with him.

لِّيُعَذِّبَ اللّٰهُ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ وَالْمُنٰفِقٰتِ وَالْمُشْرِكِيْنَ وَالْمُشْرِكٰتِ وَيَتُوْبَ اللّٰهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَالْمُؤْمِنٰتِ ؕ وَكَانَ اللّٰهُ غَفُوْرًا رَّحِيْمًا ۝٧٣

(33-73) (The consequence of man's carrying the trust is) that Allah may chastise hypocritical men and hypocritical women and accept the repentance of believing men and believing women. He is Most Forgiving, Most Merciful.